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COMMENTARY

ON

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

VOL. I.

THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY,

INSTITUTED IN MAY M.DCCC.XLIII.

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JOHN CALVIN.

Acting and Editorial Secretary, Robert Pitcairn, F.S.A.Sc.
Office, 9, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.

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COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN,

BY THE REV. WILLIAM PRINGLE.

VOLUME FIRST.

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PRINTED FOR THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.
M.DCCC.L.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

All who take delight in the Holy Scriptures are familiarly acquainted with the writings of the Prophet Isaiah. Every variety of taste finds in them its appropriate gratification. Lofty conceptions, illustrated by splendid imagery, and clothed in language usually copious and flowing, sometimes abrupt, but always graceful, leave no room for hesitation to pronounce him, with Bishop Lowth, to be "the most sublime and elegant of the Prophets of the Old Testament." He is regarded with peculiar veneration as an honest, fearless, and able messenger of the Most High God, boldly reproving nobles and monarchs, denouncing the judgments of Heaven against all transgressors, and asserting the claims of the Divine law and government above all human authority. In his Prophecies he takes a wide range, surveys those nations which power or wealth or learning or commerce had raised to the highest celebrity in those remote times, and describes their rise and fall, and wonderful revolutions, so eagerly traced by us in the page of history, as the execution of Jehovah's counsels, and the arrangements of unerring wisdom. But chiefly does he pour out rich instruction concerning the Messiah, whose life and sufferings, and death and glorious reign, he delineates so faithfully, and with such thrilling interest, that he has obtained the appellation of "The Evangelical Prophet." To the devout reader

there is added a still more powerful attraction in his seraphic piety, which, breathing throughout all his communications, and kindling a holy flame in the hearts of the children of God, attests the important fact, not only that in the visions of God he reached the noblest heights of inspiration, but—which was far more valuable—that he enjoyed habitual and intimate fellowship with *The Father of Spirits.*

The period during which he exercised the prophetical office is declared, in the inscription of his Prophecies, to have been during the reigns *of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.* Beyond this general indication nothing certain can be obtained; for dates were only beginning to attract the notice of civilized nations, and had not yet been examined with such carefulness, or denoted with such precision, as their importance demands. The Translator of "The Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets" (vol. i. p. xii.) tells us that ISAIAH flourished between 810 B.C. and 698 B.C. This interval of 112 years leaves a large margin, which chronologers have filled up with considerable diversity of views.

Assuming 763 B.C. to be the year in which the prophetic ministry of ISAIAH is believed by some to have commenced, we are led to observe this remarkable coincidence, that about thirteen years earlier began the Grecian or Olympic era, which opens with the First Olympiad; and about ten years later began the Roman Era, which opens with the founding of the city of Rome. This reminds us to glance at the contemporary history of nations unlike in their origin and progress, and in the effects which they produced on the human race. Historians, to whom the name of despised Palestine was scarcely known, have traced the brilliant career of those gigantic empires by which it was overshadowed. While amidst a long list of warriors, and poets, and orators, and statesmen, who were supposed to have achieved a deathless fame, those empires hastened to decay,

ISAIAH and his brethren the prophets were laying the foundations of the universal dominion and glorious reign of Him who *hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written,* KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev. xix. 16.) During the season of highest prosperity, when the literature of Greece and Rome, which even now exerts a powerful influence on modern Europe, enjoyed its most exalted renown, that undisguised heathenism which disowned the government and denied the perfections of the Most High GOD, presented a humiliating contrast to those noble and affecting views of the Divine nature and attributes and works which prevailed in the land of JEHOVAH. The difference reminds us of one of the plagues of Egypt ; for there was spread over the nations a moral darkness, *a darkness which might be felt, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.* (Exod. x. 21, 23.) Rome was proud of having reduced that favoured land to the rank of one of her provinces, and struck medals to represent Judea sitting under a palm-tree bewailing her captivity ; but the religion of Judea, instead of being crushed and annihilated, assumed the more lovely aspect of the religion of Jesus, and *went forth conquering and to conquer.*

Many of our Author's published Commentaries were nothing else than reports of his public Lectures. BUDÆUS[1] has explained the manner in which these reports were prepared. The language was extemporaneous, and, had we not known his prodigious command of the Latin tongue, we might have wondered at the elegance with which he spoke on such occasions ; but his slow and distinct utterance, as SCALIGER assures us, was such as to enable an expert writer to take down the very words which CALVIN used. Two or three scribes were usually employed, and a copy, drawn out by a comparison of their manuscripts, was submitted to the perusal of the Lecturer, who, after making any corrections

[1] See *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets,* p. xxiv.

which appeared to be necessary, attested it as a faithful record of what had been uttered.

This COMMENTARY has come down to us in a still more authentic shape. Not only does the Author assert, in his Dedication to King Edward, which was prefixed to the First Edition, that it had been "faithfully and skilfully compiled from his Lectures,"[1] but in his Dedication to Queen Elizabeth, prefixed to the Second Edition, he pronounces the revision to have been so thorough and laborious, that "it ought justly to be reckoned a new work."[2] It is highly gratifying to find that, in the exposition of a book so important and extensive as the prophecies of ISAIAH, CALVIN gave the fruits of his mature judgment, while he was in the full vigour of his age.

CLEMENT COTTON translated this Commentary into English from the French Version, in 1609. His translation, though not altogether suitable to modern taste, is faithful, vigorous, idiomatic, and not inelegant. To this volume is prefixed his Title-page and "Epistle Dedicatorie," together with a curious "Epigram," in which a physician of that period expresses his warm admiration of the great Reformer.

In the concluding volume of this Commentary will be given a LITERAL TRANSLATION OF CALVIN'S LATIN VERSION, and copious INDICES similar to those which have already appeared in the other Commentaries.

W. P.

AUCHTERARDER, 17*th May*, 1850.

[1] See p. xix. [2] See p. xvi.

A

COMMENTARY

VPON THE PROPHECIE OF ISAIAH.

BY

MR. IOHN CALVIN.

WHEREVNTO ARE ADDED FOVRE TABLES;
The firſt touching places of Scripture alleaged: The ſecond, of the principall *matters handled: The third, of Authors and diuers names mentioned:* The fourth, of certaine texts cited out of Iſaiah in the new Teſtament, *which by the Author in the Commentarie are* compared and reconciled.

TRANSLATED OVT OF FRENCH INTO ENGLISH: BY *C. C.*

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſinne of the world. Iohn i. 29.

To him alſo giue all the Prophets witneſſe, that through his name all that beleeue in him, ſhall receiue remiſsion of ſinnes. Act. x. 43.

Lord, who will beleeue our report? And to whom is the arme of the Lord reuealed? Iſai. liii. 1. Iohn xii. 37. 38.

AT LONDON

Imprinted by FELIX KYNGSTON, and are to be ſold by *William Cotton*, dwelling in Pater noſter Row, at the ſigne of the golden Lion. 1609.

TO THE HIGH AND MIGHTIE PRINCE,

HENRIE,

PRINCE OF GREAT BRITTAINE,

SONNE AND HEIRE APPARANT TO OUR Soueraigne Lord, IAMES King of *Great Brittaine, &c.*

AND TO THE MOST NOBLE AND VERTVOVS PRINCESSE, THE LADY ELIZABETHS GRACE,

His Highneſſe moſt deare Sifter; all honour and happineſſe, *with eternall glorie through Chriſt* IESVS.

MOST gracious and renowned Princes, hauing translated out of French into our English tongue the booke of the prophecie of *Isaiah*, interpreted and expounded by Master *Iohn Caluin*, of reuerend memorie: I humblie craue that it may be published vnder your most Princely names and protection. The reason of this my humble petition is, that the honor of so noble a worke may not be imbased by the meanes of my endeuours. This Prophet, by birth, was the sonne of *Amos*, esteemed by many to haue been brother to *Azarias* King of Iudah, and Father in law to King *Manasses:* which being so, this Prophet was by birth of the blood Royal, and descended of the house of *Dauid*, which for the promise of Christ to come of him, was the most noble house of all the Kings of the earth. Being so borne, his education could not be but Princely, and his bringing vp in all good learning, wisdome, vertue, and honor. His spirituall graces, not attained vnto by ordinarie meanes, but inspired into him immediatly by the Spirit of God, were excellent. This appeareth particularly in the sixth Chapter of this Prophecie, declaring that an Angell of God with a burning coale taken from the Lords Altar, and laide to the mouth of the Prophet, refined his lips and his tongue, that they became pure and

precious as the finest Gold. The same is manifest in all the booke of his Prophecie; wherein both the light and the heate of that heauenly fire appeareth. For he not onely declared the will of God sincerely, according to the lawe and testimonie deliuered to *Moses*, but also foreshewed the future euents of the Kingdome of *Iudah*, and of all the flourishing states and Kingdomes of his time.

He Prophecieth also of the birth of Iesus Christ, as if hee had been taught by the Angell *Gabriel;* who brought the annunciation and message of it to the blessed Virgin his mother. Of his passion and death he spake, as if with the Apostle *Iohn* he had stoode by when he was crucified. His resurrection he described, as if with all the Apostles he had stoode vpon Mount Oliuet, where the Lord tooke the cloude of glorie as his heauenly Chariot to ascend and goe vp to his Father. His zeale and indignation against sinne is euident euery where, in his sharpe reproofes of the offences of all estates.

Finally, the booke of his Prophecie beareth written in the head of it the names of foure Kings, in whose time he prophecied; and before whom as a vessell of golde he bare the name of God with great honour. All which things being royall, it seemed to me most conuenient that his booke should still beare in the front of it the names of Princes. And as hee foreshewed that Kings should bee Fosterfathers, and Queenes Nurces of the Church of Christ, so my desire was that his booke might be published vnder the names and protection of Christian Princes.

Moreouer, I was led hereunto by the example of this Interpreter, whose exposition vpon *Isaias* prophesie I translate; namelie, of M. *Iohn Caluin*, a man in his time of excellent pietie and learning; and one of the great lights, whereby it hath pleased God both to chase away the errors of poperie, as the darknes of the shadow of death; and to cause his maruellous and comfortable light of the Gospell to shine vnto this present age. For hee dedicated his first exposition of this booke to the young Prince, King *Edward* the sixth, of famous memorie, for the princelie graces, for the zealous loue of true religion, and of al heroical vertues,

wherewith in his young yeeres he raised an admirable expectation of future glorie, if his precious life had long continued. He was also most worthily renowned with highest glorie, for that gracious reformation in religion, which was established by his regal authority, and which our English Church at this day with great comfort doth enioy, vnder the happie gouernment of our Soueraigne Lord the King, your most noble and renowned Father.

Furthermore, the same Author setting out againe this Commentarie, amplified and enlarged, he dedicated this second edition to our late most gracious Queene *Elizabeth*, worthie of eternall memorie in this Kingdome, for the reestablishing (after a few yeeres alteration) of the zealous reformation of her most vertuous brother. Which example hath led mee in most humble manner to seeke for the same worke, the high patronage and protection of such Princes, like those to whom hee presented this his seruice.

To whom I know none so like as your selues, both in regard of your high estate, and also in like most noble descent from the vnited houses of Yorke and Lancaster. Besides which resemblance, your Highnesse also is of like yeeres to the yong Prince King *Edward*, and in the eies of all the kingdome, of like hope of excellent vertue and zealous proceedings in the aduancement of Christian religion.

In like manner your Grace resembleth the most gracious late Queene *Elizabeth*, both in her royall name, and also in the constant expectation of all men, to expresse in time all the princely vertues and graces that shined in that most renowned Princesse, from this Westerne part of the world, to the furthest East, and to the rising of the Sunne.

In which respects, esteeming such a dedication, most like that which my author made of his owne worke, I haue most humblie craued that this my translation of it might bee vouchsafed the honour to haue your Princelie names written in the beginning of it. For notwithstanding the great difference that is betweene a reuerend learned writer and expounder of the holie Scriptures, and the translator of such an exposition, yet this meane seruice hath also his good vse in the Church of God; and is of long and tedious labour to

such as take paines therein; which being gratiouslie accepted, may encourage others to trauell in this kind, and cause many to giue thankes to God for you both, by whose most princely fauours and protection, they are made partakers of such worthie writings. And I shall alwaies pray Almightie God, with this new yeere, to multiply many more vpon you, and dailie replenish your hearts with all princely and heroicall graces, that may enable and adorne Princes of so hie estates, amongst this people.

Your Highnesse, and Graces most humblie deuoted, in all loyall and dutiful affection,

CLEMENT COTTON.

An Epigram vpon the Translation of M. Caluins Commentarie vpon the Prophecie of Isaiah.

THRICE happie (England) if thou knew'st thy blisse,
Since Christs eternall Gospell in thee shin'd
Thou art. H'is beetle-blind that sees not this,
Brutishly ingrate that with a thankfull mind
Doth not acknowledge Gods great Grace herein,
And learne thereby for to forsake his sinne.

Gods word hath long in thee been soundly taught,
The sound thereof hath rung throughout the Land,
And many a Soule by Fishers net been caught,
Which erst lay thrall in Satans cruell band:
This fauour great by none can be exprest,
But such as haue it felt in their owne brest.

Thy natiue sonnes in thine owne bowels bred,
Like faithfull Shepheards haue done worthilie,
And thee with store of heauenlie Manna fed,
Forcing the Wolues to leaue their crueltie,
To slinke aside, and hide themselues in holes,
In caues and dens, like pur-blind Backs and Moles.

TYNDALL, FRITH, PHILPOT, father LATIMER,
The Gospell preacht by word, by life, by death:
IUEL, FOX, REYNOLDS, FULK, and WHITAKER
To second them haue spent their vitall breath.
In hot pursuit of that great Romish Bore,
Who spoiled quite this English vine before.

I spare to speake of DEERINGS siluer voice,
Of GREENHAMS zeale, of PERKINS labours sound,
Of hundreds moe of Zion-builders choice,
The like whereof can scarce elsewhere be found:
Such ground-worke they of Gods truth here haue plac'd
As neuer shall by Hels whole force be razt.

Besides all these, of forren Lights the chiefe,
Beza, and Vrsinus, many other moe,
Martyr, Musculus, for thy more reliefe
Are seene in English weed abroade to goe
From place to place in euery Shire and Towne,
To teach the Truth and throw all Errors downe.

And here presented is vnto thy sight
The Roiall Prophet Esaias Euangel:
For so me thinkes I may it terme aright,
That Prince of holy Prophets doth so well,
So liuely Christs whole historie presage,
As if h' had liu'd in that same very Age.

Whose Oracles great Caluin doth vnfold
In thine owne natiue Tongue for thy Soules health.
Here maist thou gather precious Stones and Gold,
And store vp heapes of Heauenly lasting wealth;
Here maist thou find with very little paine
Which would'st not lose for thousand Worlds againe.

Here maist thou see the black-mouth'd Atheists
Confounded quite by Demonstration cleare;
The cunning Papist put vnto his shifts,
And made in his right Colours to appeare;
Her's Christ, his Truth, and Life, thee set before,
Heauens Gates set open wide: what would'st thou more?

By Francis Hering, Doctor in Physicke.

TO HER SERENE HIGHNESS,

NOT LESS ILLUSTRIOUS BY HER OWN VIRTUES THAN BY THE SPLENDOUR OF ROYALTY,

ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND, &c.

Although, in making improvements on this Commentary, I have bestowed so much care and industry, most noble Queen, that it ought justly to be reckoned a new work, yet, as in the first edition it was dedicated to your brother King Edward, who, though a youth, greatly excelled the men of his age, and whom I wish to be held in remembrance by posterity, as he deserves, I had intended to make no change in that dedication. But since, amidst that wretched and lamentable dispersion of the Church and oppression of pure doctrine, which raged with prodigious violence for a short period, this book, together with the whole doctrine of true godliness, was banished from England for a time, but now, I trust, favoured by your happy reign, will be restored to its former privileges, I thought that there would be no impropriety if to the name of a most excellent king I should join your own name, which is regarded by all good men with not less esteem and satisfaction. Not only was an opportunity offered, but necessity appeared to demand, that I should obtain your full protection to this Commentary, the banishment of which, I am aware, was beheld by a great number of your godly subjects with deep sorrow.

Yet it is not so much my object to be favoured with your countenance in my personal labours, as humbly to entreat, and by the sacred name of Christ to implore, not only that,

through your kindness, all orthodox books may again be welcomed and freely circulated in England, but that your chief care may be directed to promote religion, which has fallen into shameful neglect. And if this is justly demanded from all kings of the earth by the Only-begotten Son of GOD, by a still more sacred tie does he hold you bound, most noble Queen, to perform this duty; for when even you, though a king's daughter, were not exempted from that dreadful storm which fell with severity on the heads of all the godly, by the wonderful manner in which he brought you out safe, though not unmoved by the fear of danger, he has laid you under obligation to devote yourself and all your exertions to his service. So far are you from having any reason to be ashamed of this deliverance, that GOD has given you large and abundant grounds of boasting, by confirming you to the image of his Son, on whom the Prophet ISAIAH bestows this among other commendations, that *from prison and judgment* (Isa. liii. 8) he was raised to the loftiest height of heavenly dominion.

As it is no ordinary honour to resemble such a model, so whenever you recollect, what ought never to be forgotten by you, from what wretched and fearful trembling GOD rescued you, by openly stretching out his hand, remember also that it was done for the express purpose that you, on the other hand, should, with invincible determination and unshaken firmness of mind, acknowledge your obligation to your Protector and Redeemer, and, laying aside all other kinds of business, a vast number of which, I have no doubt, will crowd upon you at the commencement of your reign, labour to have his worship, which for a time was basely and disgracefully corrupted in that kingdom, restored to its former splendour. And if Satan, by presenting many and powerful obstructions, endeavour to produce fear or slothfulness, you are well aware from whom you ought to ask boldness to go steadily forward and to vanquish all opposition; and GOD, who bestows his blessing on the actions of private individuals, will not fail to grant a happy and desirable issue to his work.

You ought also to be stimulated, venerable Queen, by a sacred regard to duty; for the Prophet ISAIAH demands not

only from *Kings* that they be *nursing-fathers*, but also from *Queens* that they be *nursing-mothers*. (Isa. xlix. 23.) This duty you ought to discharge, not only by removing the filth of Popery, and by cherishing the flock which not long ago lay trembling and concealed, but by gathering the exiles who chose rather to part with the advantages of their native country than to remain in it so long as godliness was banished from it. This will be the crowning proof of your gratitude to GOD, and a sacrifice of most delightful savour, that the faithful worshippers of GOD, who, on account of their profession of the Gospel, were constrained to wander far and wide through distant countries, shall now, through your kindness, be restored to their native country. We, too, in whom that mournful spectacle awakened, as it ought to have done, the most poignant grief, have abundant cause for rejoicing, and for congratulating you, when, through the gracious exercise of your royal will, we see the way opened for the return of our brethren, not only to be at liberty to worship GOD in your Majesty's dominions, but to render assistance to others.

And now, most noble Queen, if you shall be graciously pleased, as I trust you will, not to disdain this testimony of my respect for you, which some would perhaps reckon to be trivial and of little value, I shall esteem it to be no ordinary kindness, and will endeavour through my whole life to testify my gratitude by every means in my power.

May the LORD guide you, most illustrious Queen, by the Spirit of wisdom, uphold you with invincible courage, protect and enrich your Highness with every kind of blessings!

GENEVA, 15th January; the day which, it was reported, had been fixed for your coronation; on which account I more gladly set myself to write, having partially recovered from an attack of quartan ague.

TO HIS SERENE HIGHNESS,

EDWARD SIXTH, KING OF ENGLAND, &c.

A TRULY CHRISTIAN PRINCE.

JOHN CALVIN.

THOUGH I acknowledge that this COMMENTARY has been faithfully and skilfully compiled from my LECTURES, yet, as it was drawn up by another person, I was at first afraid, most illustrious King, that if it should appear in public bearing your name on the Dedication, I might be thought not to have acted properly towards your Majesty. But this doubt was removed chiefly by one consideration, that as a Prophet who was of royal descent, and a most noble ambassador of CHRIST, the supreme King, is highly appropriate to your rank, so the labour which I had bestowed on the explanation of his Prophecies would be accepted and valued by your Majesty. His experience made him acquainted with five kings exceedingly unlike each other in their dispositions, to whom in uninterrupted succession he officiated as a teacher; and it is unnecessary to inform you which of these you should chiefly select for imitation, or to exhort you to that which you show that you are already sufficiently willing to do.

UZZIAH and JOTHAM were favourable to him, though they were not so courageous as they ought to have been in maintaining the worship of GOD. His chief contest was with AHAZ, not indeed as an open enemy, but as a cunning hypocrite full of fraud and dissimulation. The servants of GOD cannot have a more dangerous class of enemies. His successor, HEZEKIAH, not only treated the holy man with reve-

rence, but modestly submitted to his doctrine like one of the common people, and, what is still more, endured patiently severe reproof when it was found necessary. MANASSEH, who was the last of them, and whom a strongly supported Jewish tradition represents as having been his son-in-law, subjected him to a frightful kind of torture, and wickedly put him to death. But at the very time when he received assistance from those who were not bad kings, and even during the reign of HEZEKIAH himself, who was so valiant a supporter of godliness, he never ceased to be harassed by sharp and troublesome disputes, and to undergo severe conflicts, so hard and uncommon is it for men to assent to sound doctrine; and not only so, but they who resolve to discharge the prophetical office honestly and faithfully must carry on a continual war with the world. The more earnestly ought godly kings to labour to aid the servants of GOD by their countenance, that they may not be distressed beyond measure by the insolence of the ungodly.

But as this virtue is excellent and truly heroic, so, if you search the history of all ages from the beginning of the world, it has been uncommon, and there have been very few by whom it was cultivated. Many have indolently and carelessly, as if it had been a matter with which they had no concern, allowed the truth of GOD to be crushed without making any resistance. But the greater part have been openly hostile, and have opposed it with violence and rage; and would that they who at the present day profess to be Christians were as earnest in upholding the doctrine of salvation as they are haughty in boasting of the name!

Not to mention others, it may justly be regarded as no ordinary consolation amidst the present distresses of the Church, that GOD has raised you up and endowed you with such excellent abilities and dispositions for defending the cause of godliness, and that you so diligently render that obedience to GOD in this matter which you know that he accepts and approves. For although the affairs of the kingdom are hitherto conducted by your counsellors, and although your Majesty's most illustrious uncle, the Duke of SOMMERSET, and many others, have religion so much at heart, that they

labour diligently, as they ought to do, in establishing it; yet in your own exertions you go so far beyond them all as to make it very manifest that they receive no small excitement from the zeal which they observe in you. Not only are you celebrated for possessing a noble disposition, and some seeds of virtues, (which at so early an age is usually thought to be remarkable,) but for a maturity of those virtues far beyond your years, which would be singularly admired, as well as praised, at a very advanced age. Your piety especially is so highly applauded, that the Prophet ISAIAH, I am fully convinced, will have one that will regard him with as much reverence, now that he is dead, as HEZEKIAH did when he was alive.

As to the advantage which you will derive from the work, it is better that you learn that from your own perusal, and I have made some observations on that subject in the Preface. There is only one point on which I have resolved to say a few words to your Majesty. After having proclaimed GOD'S just complaints against an ungrateful people, and threatened against the Jews such punishment as their base apostacy and inveterate rebellion deserved, that the time was at hand when they should be brought into a state of frightful desolation, the Prophet next speaks of a new and amazing restoration of the Church, and promises that henceforth GOD will secure that, in spite of enemies, it shall always be in a happy and flourishing condition.

Such gladness and prosperity was tasted by those who, after their return from the captivity in Babylon, having set up their altars for sacrifices, could form the expectation of higher blessings than those which they at that time enjoyed; just as we, by beholding the dawn, are led to expect that the rising of the sun will soon follow. But when, in the brightness of his Gospel, CHRIST, the Sun of Righteousness, arose, all that had been so eloquently described by the revelations of the Prophet was far exceeded by the event. Within a short time the knowledge of the true GOD was spread almost throughout the whole world. Pure religion, which formerly lay despised in Judea, as in a dark corner, was circulated through all nations and provinces, and began

to be honoured in such a manner, that innumerable tongues, in harmony of faith, called on GOD.

Having collected churches in various places, the Son of GOD erected his royal throne in a conspicuous situation, where it might be beheld from the rising to the setting of the sun. The churches, endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, not only obtained prodigious communications of the divine goodness, but were themselves striking exhibitions of astonishing power, which even the blind could perceive. And although the Son of GOD reigned under the Cross, yet, amidst the arduous conflicts of persecutions, his glory shone brighter, and his triumphs were more splendid than if the Church had enjoyed undisturbed prosperity. At length, the haughty loftiness of the Roman empire, yielding submission to CHRIST, became a distinguished ornament of the house of GOD.

But the continuance of this prosperity was prevented by the malice and ingratitude of men; and thus the Spouse of CHRIST, deprived of so costly a robe, degraded from so high a rank, and stripped of such gorgeous raiment, was afterwards reduced to an unsightly and wretched condition. Some remains, indeed, GOD preserved, as it were in places of concealment; but, as to the external beauty of the Church, nothing but desolation, confusion, and dispersion, was to be seen for many centuries. And we see how, at this very day, the Roman Antichrist, far and wide usurping and tyrannizing over the sanctuary of GOD, tears, crushes, and tramples under his feet all that belonged to GOD. For since the purity of doctrine is there corrupted by monstrous errors, since shocking murder has come into the room of lawful government, since the sacraments are in part debased by gross corruptions, and in part exposed to disgraceful sale, what but melancholy ruin is left of the true and natural beauty of the spiritual building?

Yet in our age, contrary to the expectation of all, the LORD hath again begun to *raise up that which was fallen,* (Amos ix. 11,) that there might at least be left among us an outline of the true temple, in which GOD should be worshipped with purity, and according to the requirements of

the Gospel. Some inconsiderable persons, taken from the common people, have been selected by him as his architects, to promote this work by pure doctrine. It is, indeed, an arduous and extensive work, though Satan should give us no annoyance. But now that he employs every expedient for breaking down the Church, as soon as any portion of it has been erected, what wonder is it if we have great and sorrowful toil, and make small and feeble progress?

Accordingly, the haughty tyrants scorn us, as if, in our endeavours to overthrow the tyranny of the Roman See, we were labouring to overturn Olympus. Those clever and ingenious men (as they imagine themselves to be) indulge in ridiculing our perseverance, in labouring hard to restore the condition of the Church, as if anything fixed or permanent could be obtained. They imagine that they have so solid a foundation, and are so well defended on all sides, that it would be as difficult to destroy Popery as to mingle heaven and earth. But the opinions of those men are somewhat various. The refractoriness of the world being too great to admit of being placed under any restraint, they hold that we labour in vain when we seek to correct vices, and to promote a pure and faithful administration of the Church.

The witticism of ERASMUS is well known. "Whom does CAPITO expect to be his tenth successor?" He could not deny that WOLFGANG CAPITO was a holy man, and laboured with the purest motives to reform the Church; but being convinced that it is idle for the ministers of CHRIST to struggle to correct the wickedness of the world as if they were endeavouring to cause the rivers to run in a contrary direction, ERASMUS, imitating the custom of lazy philosophers, represented all of us, in the person of one man, as chargeable with inconsiderate zeal. But on both sides they are greatly mistaken, in not considering that, when we repair the ruins of the Church, we give our labours to the LORD, in obedience to his laws and injunctions, and yet the restoration of the Church is his own work. Nor is it without good reason that this is taught in every part of Scripture, and that it is so earnestly enforced by the Prophet ISAIAH. Remembering this doctrine, therefore, and relying on the assistance of

God, let us not hesitate to undertake a work which is far beyond our own strength, and let no obstacle turn aside or discourage us, so as to abandon our undertaking.

And here I expressly call upon you, most excellent King, or rather, God himself addresses you by the mouth of his servant Isaiah, charging you to proceed, to the utmost of your ability and power, in carrying forward the restoration of the Church, which has been so successfully begun in your kingdom. First, you daily read and hear that this duty is enjoined on you in the kingdom over which you rule. More especially Isaiah, as I have said, calls *Kings the nursing-fathers of the Church*, (Is. xlix. 23,) and does not permit them to withhold that assistance which her afflicted condition demands. Nor ought your mind to be slightly affected by the consideration, that the Prophet pronounces a woe on all kings and nations who refuse to give her their support. Next, your Majesty sees plainly what is urgently demanded by the times. Though you may not have great success in your labours, yet, knowing that this worship is acceptable to God, and is a sacrifice of most delightful savour, you ought not to be turned aside from your purpose by any event, however calamitous. Seeing, therefore, that God exhorts you to be courageous, and at the same time promises success, why should you not cheerfully obey him when he calls?

In another passage Isaiah says, *Prepare the way, prepare the way for my people.* (Is. lxii. 10.) It is well known how hopeless was the return of the captives to their native country. Nor did this event take place at that time; but the Prophet, beholding by the Spirit what posterity some time afterwards would actually enjoy, lest any of the godly should be disheartened by so sad a spectacle, meets them beforehand with the assurance that there would be no kind of obstructions so powerful and formidable that God would not break through them to deliver his Church. Not less do we need at this day to be cheered by consolation.

It is of high importance, most noble King, that you should be stimulated to activity by the consideration of the duty enjoined on you; for Isaiah exhorts all kings and magistrates, in the person of Cyrus, to stretch forth their hand to

the Church, when in distress, to restore her to her former condition. Yet there is this difference between your condition and that of CYRUS, that he who was a stranger to the LORD'S flock never was expressly taught freely and willingly to come forward and undertake to be a defender of the Church; but to you, to whom the LORD has not only given adoption, but has likewise assigned a distinguished place among his sons, the Prophet may be said to stretch out his hand and call you to this office. So much the more boldly and resolutely ought you, noble King, to proceed in this course.

The matter is, as I have said, full of great difficulties; and still greater are the annoyances by which it is attended, and the dangers in which it is involved; for Satan never ceases to employ innumerable expedients, if in any way he may succeed in subverting or destroying the holy temple of GOD; and sometimes GOD intends to make trial of our steadfastness by such attacks. But if you lay it down as a settled principle, that there is nothing which you and your most excellent Council have hitherto undertaken, or are now performing, for restoring the condition of the Church, which is not supported by the authority of GOD, you will unquestionably feel how wonderfully he accomplishes all those things which he gives in charge to his servants. From this happy result England will derive inestimable advantage; and we, too, will congratulate you on your prosperity, and that of your whole kingdom. Meanwhile, I shall aid those holy exertions by my prayers, as it is my duty to do, since I have nothing better to offer you.

Farewell, most illustrious King! may the LORD prosper and preserve your Majesty for a long period, aid and guide you by his Holy Spirit, and bless you in all things!—Amen.

GENEVA, 25*th December*, 1550.

THE

PREFACE TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

It is customary to make a great number of statements and dissertations about the office of the Prophets. But, in my opinion, the shortest way of treating this subject is to trace the Prophets to the Law, from which they derived their doctrine, like streams from a fountain; for they placed it before them as their rule, so that they may be justly held and declared to be its interpreters, who utter nothing but what is connected with the Law. Now, the Law consists chiefly of three parts: first, the doctrine of life; secondly, threatenings and promises; thirdly, the covenant of grace, which, being founded on Christ, contains within itself all the special promises. As to ceremonies, they were religious exercises which strengthened the attachment of the people to the worship of God and to godliness, and consequently were added to the First Table. The Prophets, therefore, enter more largely into the illustration of doctrine, and explain more fully what is briefly stated in the Two Tables, and lay down what the Lord chiefly requires from us. Next, the threatenings and promises, which Moses had proclaimed in general terms, are applied by them to their own time and minutely described. Lastly, they express more clearly what Moses says more obscurely about Christ and his grace, and bring forward more copious and more abundant proofs of the free covenant.

To make this matter still more clear, we must go a little farther back, to the Law itself, which the Lord prescribed as a perpetual rule for the Church, to be always in the hands of men, and to be observed by every succeeding age. Perceiving that there was danger lest an ignorant and undisciplined nation should need something more than the doctrine delivered by Moses, and that the nation could scarcely be restrained without the use of a tighter rein, God forbids them to consult magicians or soothsayers, augurs or diviners; enjoins them to be satisfied with his doctrine alone; but at the same time he likewise adds that he will take care that there shall never be wanting a Prophet in Israel. He does this purposely, with the view of meeting an objection which the people might have brought forward, that their condition would be worse than that of the infidels, all of whom had their priests of various orders, their soothsayers, augurs, astrologers, Chaldeans, and such like, whom they had it in their power to visit and consult, but that they would have no one to aid them by his advice in intricate and difficult matters. In order, therefore, to deprive them of every pretence, and to hinder them from polluting themselves by the abominable practices of the Gentiles, God promises that *he will raise up Prophets*, (Deut. xviii. 15,) by whom he will make known his will, and who shall faithfully convey the message which he has entrusted to them; so that in future there will be no reason to complain that they are in want of anything. There is an exchange (ἑτέρωσις) of the plural for the singular number, when he uses the word *Prophet;* for although, as it is expressly interpreted by Peter, (Acts iii. 22,) that passage relates literally and chiefly to Christ, (because he is the head of the Prophets, and all of them depend on him for their doctrine, and with one consent point to him,) yet it relates also to the rest of the Prophets, and includes them under a collective name.

When he promised to give them Prophets, by whom he would make known his will and purpose, the Lord commanded the people to rely on their interpretations and doctrine. And yet it was not intended to make any addition to the Law, but to interpret it faithfully, and to sanction its

authority. Hence also, when MALACHI exhorts the people to adhere to the purity of faith and to be steadfast in the doctrine of religion, he says, *Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel.* (Mal. iv. 3.) He reminds them of the Law of God alone, and enjoins them to be satisfied with it. Does Malachi therefore mean that Prophecies should be despised? By no means; but as the Prophecies are appendages of the Law, and are all briefly summed up in the Law, that exhortation was sufficient; for they who understand that summary of doctrine, and its leading points, and carefully observe them, assuredly will not neglect the Prophecies. It would be absurd to boast of attending to the word, were we to disregard the divine interpretations of it; as many persons at the present day impudently boast of attending to the word, while they cannot at all endure the godly admonitions and reproofs which proceed from the doctrine of the word.

Thus when the Prophets inculcate moral duties, they bring forward nothing new, but only explain those parts of the Law which had been misunderstood. For instance, the people thought that they had discharged their duty admirably, when they offered sacrifices and performed the outward services of religion; for the world measures God by its own standard, and renders to him a carnal and counterfeited worship. The Prophets sharply reprove this, and show that all ceremonies are of no avail, when sincerity of heart is wanting, and that God is worshipped by believing on him, and by actually calling on his name. This had indeed been plainly enough declared by the Law; but it was necessary that it should be earnestly inculcated and frequently brought to their remembrance, and likewise that there should be an exposure of that hypocrisy with which men cloak themselves under the guise of ceremonies. As to the Second Table, the Prophets drew their exhortations from it, for the purpose of showing that men ought to refrain from all injustice, violence, and deceit. All that they do, therefore, is nothing else than keeping up the people's obedience to the Law.

In threatenings and promises, the Prophets have some-

thing peculiar; for what Moses had stated in general terms they minutely describe. They have likewise visions which peculiarly belong to them, by which the Lord revealed future events, in order to apply the promises and threatenings to the use of the people, and to declare more fully the will of God. Moses threatens, "God will pursue thee in battle; thou shalt be harassed by enemies abroad and by internal quarrels at home. Thy life shall hang as it were on a thread; thou shalt *tremble at the rustling of a leaf*," (Lev. xxvi. 36,) and such like. On the other hand, the Prophets say, "God will arm the Assyrians against thee, he will call for the Egyptians by a hiss, he will raise up the Chaldeans, Israel shall be carried into captivity, the kingdom of Israel shall be destroyed, the enemy shall lay waste Jerusalem and burn the temple." Similar observations might be made about the promises. Moses says, "If thou keep the commandments, the Lord will bless thee;" and then gives a general description of blessings. But the Prophets enter into detail. "This is the blessing which the Lord will bestow upon thee." Again, by Moses the Lord promises in this manner,—"Though thou be scattered and driven to the utmost parts of the world, yet will I bring thee back." (Deut. xxx. 4.) But by the Prophets he says, "Though I drive thee into Babylon, yet after seventy years will I restore thee."[1]

As to the free covenant which God established with the Patriarchs in ancient times, the Prophets are much more distinct, and contribute more to strengthen the people's attachment to it; for when they wish to comfort the godly, they always remind them of that covenant, and represent to them the coming of Christ, who was both the foundation of the covenant and the bond of the mutual relation between God and the people, and to whom therefore the whole extent of the promises must be understood to refer. Whoever understands this will easily learn what we ought to seek in the Prophets, and what is the purpose of their writings;

[1] In this comprehensive view of the writings of Moses, as compared with those of the later Prophets, our author does not quote the exact words of the sacred writers. More than one phrase shows that he had chiefly in his eye the promises and threatenings detailed in Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.—*Ed.*

and this is all that seemed necessary to be stated here on that subject.

Hence we may learn in what manner the doctrine of the word should be handled, and that we ought to imitate the Prophets, who conveyed the doctrine of the Law in such a manner as to draw from it advices, reproofs, threatenings, and consolations, which they applied to the present condition of the people. For although we do not daily receive a revelation of what we are to utter as a prediction, yet it is of high importance to us to compare the behaviour of the men of our own age with the behaviour of that ancient people; and from their histories and examples we ought to make known the judgments of God; such as, that what he formerly punished he will also punish with equal severity in our own day, for he is always like himself. Such wisdom let godly teachers acquire, if they would wish to handle the doctrine of the Prophets with any good result.

So much for the Prophets in general. To come to the Prophet Isaiah, the inscription plainly shows who he was, and at what time he uttered those prophecies; for it mentions the name of his father, Amoz, who is supposed to have been the brother of Azariah, king of Judah. Hence it is evident that Isaiah was of royal descent, and on this point all the ancients are agreed; and yet neither his birth nor his near relationship to the king, (for the Jews assert that he was the father-in-law of Manasseh,) could prevent him from being slain through dislike of the word; and no greater regard was paid to him than if he had been a person of humble rank, or had belonged to the lowest condition of society.

The time when he prophesied is here pointed out by mentioning the names of the kings. Some think that he began to prophesy towards the end of the reign of King Uzziah. They found their conjecture on the vision related in the sixth chapter, by which, Isaiah tells us, he was confirmed in his office. But that conjecture rests on very slight grounds, as will be shown at the proper place. From this description it plainly appears that he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah; and on that point I cannot entertain any doubt.

However this may be, it is evident that, at the very least, he prophesied more than sixty-four years; for Jotham reigned sixteen years, (2 Kings xv. 33;) Ahaz as many, (2 Kings xvi. 3;) Hezekiah twenty-nine, (2 Kings xviii. 2.) This amounts to sixty-one years. Add the years that he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, and afterwards during the reign of Manasseh, by whom he was put to death; and there will be, at least, sixty-four years during which Isaiah continued, without interruption, to discharge the office of a Prophet. There is indeed a highly probable conjecture, amounting almost to certainty, that he prophesied ten years beyond the period which has now been stated; but as this does not clearly rest on historical proof, I shall not debate the matter any farther.

All the servants of God ought carefully to observe this, that they may consider how patiently they ought to submit to their condition, how hard and difficult soever it may be, and ought not to reckon it a disgrace that they must endure many and severe trials, while they have before their eyes examples of such patience. It is indeed a very severe trial when they perceive that by their manifold exertions they are doing no good, and imagine that it would be a thousand times better to relinquish their post than to labour so long in vain. Such examples, therefore, they ought frequently to set before them and call to remembrance; how Isaiah, whose labours were numerous and extensive, had little success, and how Jeremiah continued for fifty years to cry aloud to the people, though the result was that they became more and more rebellious, and how no difficulties could turn them aside from their course. We, too, ought to proceed in the discharge of our duty, and patiently to endure every kind of annoyances.

It is proper to observe also the succession of kings, who are here enumerated; for amidst so great a diversity, it is impossible that the state of public affairs could remain unchanged, as we know that, whenever any change takes place in a public station, the greater part of men immediately adopt a new manner of life; and from this source many vexations must have arisen. The unshaken firmness and

unbroken courage with which he persevered ought to excite all the servants of God to imitation, that they may never bend or turn aside from the right path.

A question may arise, Was it Isaiah himself, or some other person, that wrote this inscription to his Prophecy? Not one of the commentators whose writings I have hitherto perused answers this question. For my own part, though I cannot fully satisfy my mind, yet I shall tell what I think. The Prophets, after having publicly addressed the people, drew up a brief abstract of their discourse, and placed it on the gates of the temple, that all might see and become more fully acquainted with the prophecy. When it had been exposed for a sufficient number of days, it was removed by the ministers of the temple, and placed in the Treasury, that it might remain as a permanent record. In this way, it is probable, the books of the Prophets were compiled; and this may be inferred from the second chapter of the book of Habakkuk, if it be properly examined, and likewise from the eighth chapter of this Prophecy. (Hab. ii. 2; Is. viii. 1.) Those who have carefully and judiciously perused the Prophets will agree with me in thinking that their discourses have not always been arranged in a regular order, but that the roll was made up as occasion served. That these writings have come down to us through the agency of the Priests, whose duty it was to transmit the prophecies to posterity, (though the Priests were often the bitterest enemies of the Prophets,) is a remarkable instance of the providence of God.

COMMENTARY

ON

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I.

1. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2. Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7. Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burnt with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence,

1. Visio Isaiæ filii Amoz, quam vidit super Iudam et Ierusalem in diebus Usiæ, Iotham, Achaz, Ezechiæ, regum Iuda.

2. Audite caeli, et ausculta terra; quia sic Dominus loquitur, Filios educavi et sustuli, ipsi tamen scelerate egerunt in me, (*vel, rebellârunt contra me.*)

3. Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe dominorum suorum: Israel non cognovit, populus meus non intellexit.

4. O gens scelesta, populus onustus iniquitate, semen malignorum, filii degeneres! dereliquerunt Iehovam, spreverunt (*vel, provocârunt ad iram*) sanctum Israelis, alienati sunt retrorsum.

5. Quorsum adhuc vos percuterem? Adjicietis prævaricationem. Totum caput languori, et totum cor dolori.

6. A planta pedis usque ad caput nulla in eo sanitas. Vulnus, tumor, et saniosa plaga. Nec sunt emplastro curatæ, nec circumligatæ, nec oleo delinitæ.

7. Terra vestra in vastitatem: Urbes vestræ igni succensæ: terram vestram alieni devorant in conspectu

and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah:

11. To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13. Bring no more oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17. Learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.

18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

vestro, redacta est in solitudinem, juxta subversionem exterorum.

8. Et residua manebit filia Zion, sicut tugurium in vinea, sicut diversorium in cucumerario, sicut civitas vastata.

9. Nisi Dominus exercituum residuas nobis fecisset reliquias vel tantillas, quasi Sodoma fuissemus, et similes Gomorrhæ.

10. Audite verbum Domini, principes Sodomæ: auscultate Legem Dei nostri, populus Gomorrhæ.

11. Quorsum mihi multitudo sacrificiorum vestrorum? dicit Dominus. Plenus sum holocaustis arietum, et adipe saginatorum animalium: nec sanguinem boum, aut ovium, aut hircorum desidero.

12. Quando venitis ut appareatis coram facie mea, quis hoc è manu vestra requisivit? nempe conterere atria mea.

13. Ne pergatis adducere oblationem vanitatis. Incensum abominatio est mihi. Neomeniam, et sabbathum, et solennes indictiones non potero: vana res est, nec conventum.

14. Neomenias vestras et solennia vestra odio habet anima mea: superfuerunt mihi loco oneris, fatigatus sum ferendo.

15. Cùm expanderitis manus vestras, abscondam oculos meos à vobis. Etiamsi multiplicaveritis orationem, ego non exaudiam. Manus vestræ sanguine plenæ sunt.

16. Lavate, mundemini, auferte malitiam studiorum vestrorum à conspectu oculorum meorum, desinite mala facere.

17. Discite benefacere: quærite judicium: restituite (*vel, dirigite*) oppressum: jus dicite pupillo: tuemini viduam.

18. Venite, agedum, et disceptemus, dixit Dominus: si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur: si rubicunda fuerint instar purpuræ, quasi lana erunt.

19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:
20. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken *it*.
21. How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.
22. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

23. Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.
24. Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:
25. And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city.
27. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.
28. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.
29. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
30. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.
31. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*.

19. Si volueritis, et audieritis, bonum terræ comedetis.
20. Quòd si nolueritis, et rebelles fueritis, gladio consumemini: quoniam os Domini loquutum est.

21. Quomodo facta est meretrix civitas fidelis? plena judicio fuit: et æquitas pernoctavit (*vel, habitavit*) in ea; nunc autem homicidæ.
22. Argentum tuum versum est in scoriam, et vinum tuum est aqua mixtum.
23. Principes tui perversi, et socii furum: unusquisque diligit munus, et inhiat mercedibus: causam pupilli non judicant, nec causa viduæ pervenit ad eos.

24. Propterea dicit Dominus, (*vel, Dominator,*) Iehovah exercituum, fortis Israel, Heu! consolationem capiam super hostibus meis, vindicabor de inimicis meis.
25. Convertam manum meam super te: purgabo ad liquidum scoriam tuam, et auferam omne stannum tuum.
26. Et restituam judices tuos sicut à principio, et consiliarios tuos ut ab initio. Tum dicetur de te, Civitas justitiæ, urbs fidelis.

27. Sion in judicio redimetur, et qui reducentur ad eam, in justitia.

28. Contritio autem prævaricatorum et sceleratorum simul fiet; et qui à Domino defecerunt consumentur.
29. Nempe pudifient ab arboribus quas concupivistis, et ignominia afficiemini a lucis quos elegistis.

30. Eritis certè sicut arbor cujus folium marcessit, et sicut lucus non habens aquas.
31. Eritque fortis vester (*alias, Deus*) sicut stuppa; et fictor ejus quasi scintilla; et comburentur ambo, nec erit qui extinguat.

1. *The vision of Isaiah.* The Hebrew word חָזוֹן, (*chāzōn,*) though it is derived from חָזָה, (*chāzāh,*) *he saw,* and literally

is *a vision,* yet commonly signifies *a prophecy.* For when the Scripture makes mention of special *visions* which were exhibited to the prophets in a symbolical manner, when it was the will of God that some extraordinary event should receive confirmation, in such cases the word מראה, (*măr-eh,*) *vision,* is employed. Not to multiply quotations, in a passage which relates *to prophecy* in general the writer says, that *the word of God was precious, because* חזון, (*chāzōn,*) *vision, was of rare occurrence.* (1 Sam. iii. 1.) A little afterwards, the word מראה (*măr-ah*) is employed to denote the *vision* by which God revealed himself to Samuel. (1 Sam. iii. 15.) In distinguishing between two ordinary methods of revelation, *a vision* and *a dream,* Moses speaks of *a vision* (מראה) as the special method. (Numb. xii. 6.) It is evident, however, that *the seer,* הראה, (*hārōeh,*) was the name formerly given to prophets, (1 Sam. ix. 9 ;) but by way of excellence, because God revealed to them his counsel in a familiar manner.

So far as relates to the present passage, this word unquestionably denotes the certainty of the doctrine ; as if it had been said that there is nothing contained in this book which was not made known to *Isaiah* by God himself. The derivation of the word, therefore, deserves attention ; for we learn by it that the prophets did not speak of their own accord, or draw from their own imaginations, but that they were enlightened by God, who opened their eyes to perceive those things which otherwise they would not of themselves have been able to comprehend. Thus the inscription of Isaiah recommends to us the doctrine of this book, as containing no human reasonings, but the oracles of God, in order to convince us that it contains nothing but what was revealed by the Spirit of God.

Concerning Judah. Were we to render it TO *Judah,* it would make little difference, for the preposition על (*al*) has both significations, and the meaning will still be, that everything contained in this book belongs strictly to *Judah and Jerusalem.* For though many things are scattered through it which relate to Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, and other cities and countries, yet it was not necessary that those places should

be expressly enumerated in the title; for nothing more was required than to announce the principal subject, and to explain to whom Isaiah was chiefly sent, that is, *to Jerusalem and the Jews.* Everything else that is contained in his prophecies may be said to have been accidental and foreign to the subject.

And yet it was not inconsistent with his office to make known to other nations the calamities which should overtake them; for in like manner Amos did not go beyond the limits of his calling, when he did not spare the Jews, though he was not sent to them. (Amos ii. 4, 5.) A still more familiar instance is found in the calling of Peter and Paul, the former of whom was appointed to the Jews, and the latter to the Gentiles. (Gal. ii. 8.) And yet Peter did not rush beyond the limits of his office, by preaching to the Gentiles; as, for example, when he went to Cornelius: (Acts x. 17:) nor did Paul, when he offered his services to the Jews, to whom he immediately went as soon as he entered into any city. (Acts xiii. 5; xiv. 1; xvii. 2, 10; xviii. 4, 19.) In the same light ought we to view Isaiah; for while he is careful to instruct the Jews, and directs his labours expressly towards that object, he does not transgress his proper limits when he likewise takes a passing notice of other nations.

Judah and Jerusalem. He takes *Judah* for the whole nation, and *Jerusalem* for the chief city in the kingdom; for he does not make a distinction between *Jerusalem* and *the Jews*, but mentions it, by way of eminence, (κατ' ἐξοχὴν,) as the metropolis, just as if a prophet of the present day were to address the kingdom of France, and Paris, which is the metropolis of the nation. And this was of great importance, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem might not hold themselves exempted, as if they were free from all blame, or placed above the laws on account of their high rank, and thus might send the meaner sort of people to be instructed by homely prophets. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that *Jerusalem* is mentioned separately, on account of its being situated in the tribe of Benjamin; for the half of that tribe, which was subject to the posterity of David, is included under the name of *Judah.*

2. *Hear, O heavens.* Isaiah has here imitated Moses, as all the prophets are accustomed to do; and there cannot be a doubt that he alludes to that illustrious song of Moses, in which, at the very commencement, he calls *heaven and earth* to witness against the people: *Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.* (Deut. xxxii. 1.) This is unquestionably a very severe protestation; for it conveys this meaning, that both turn to the elements which are dumb and devoid of feeling, because men have now no ears, or are bereft of all their senses. The Prophet, therefore, speaks of it as an extraordinary and monstrous thing, which ought to strike even the senseless elements with amazement. For what could be more shocking than that the Israelites should revolt from God, who had bestowed on them so many benefits? Those who think that by *heaven* are meant angels, and by *earth* men, weaken too much the import of those words, and thus destroy all their force and majesty.

Almost all the commentators consider the clause to end with the words, *for the Lord hath spoken;* as if the Prophet had intimated, that as soon as the Lord opens his sacred mouth, all ought to be attentive to hear his voice. And certainly this meaning has the appearance of being more full; but the context demands that we connect the words in a different manner, so as to make the word *hear* to refer, not in a general manner to any discourse whatever, but only to the expostulation which immediately follows. The meaning therefore is, Hear the complaint which the Lord brings forward, *I have nourished and brought up children,* &c. For he relates a prodigy, which fills him with such horror that he is compelled to summon dead creatures as witnesses, contrary to nature.

That no one may wonder at the circumstance of his addressing dumb and lifeless objects, experience very clearly shows that the voice of God is heard even by dumb creatures, and that the order of nature is nothing else than the obedience which is rendered to him by every part of the world, so that everywhere his supreme authority shines forth; for at his bidding the elements observe the law laid down to them,

and *heaven and earth* perform their duty. The *earth* yields her fruits; the sea flows not beyond her settled boundaries; the sun, moon, and stars perform their courses; the *heavens*, too, revolve at stated periods; and all with wonderful accuracy, though they are destitute of reason and understanding. But man, endued with reason and understanding, in whose ears and in whose heart the voice of God frequently sounds, remains unmoved, like one bereft of his senses, and cannot bend the neck to submit to him. Against obstinate and rebellious men shall dumb and lifeless creatures bear testimony, so that they will one day feel that this protestation was not in vain.

I have nourished. Literally it runs, *I have made them great;*[1] but as he is speaking about children, we cannot obtain a better rendering than *I have nourished*, or, *I have brought up;*[2] for instead of the verb, *to nourish*,[3] the Latins employ the phrase, *to bring up children.*[4] But he afterwards mentions other benefits which he had bestowed on them in rich abundance; as if he had said, that he not only had performed the part of a kind father, by giving them food and the ordinary means of support, but had laboured to raise them to an honourable rank. For in every sort of kindness towards them he had, as it were, exhausted himself, as he elsewhere reproaches them, *What could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done?* (Is. v. 4.) A similar charge the Lord might indeed have brought against all nations; for all of them he feeds, and on all he confers great and multiplied benefits. But he had chosen the Israelites in a peculiar manner, had given them a preference above others by adopting them into his family, had treated them as his most beloved children, had tenderly cherished them in his bosom, and, in a word, had bestowed on them every kind of blessings.

To apply these observations to our own times, we ought to consider whether our condition be not equal, or even superior, to that which the Jews formerly enjoyed. Their adoption

[1] *Feci magnos.* The term *feci* (*I have made*) exhibits the force of the Pihel form, גדלתי, (*giddalti,*) which, as in other instances, approaches the meaning of the Hiphil form, הגדלתי, (*higdalti.*)—*Ed.*

[2] Educavi, vel sustuli. [3] Enutrire. [4] Tollere liberos.

into the family of God bound them to maintain the purity of his worship. Our obligation is twofold; for not only have we been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but he who once redeemed us is pleased to favour us with his Gospel, and in this manner prefers us to all those whom he still allows to remain blinded by ignorance. If we do not acknowledge these things, how much severer punishment shall we deserve? For the more full and abundant the grace of God which hath been poured out on us, the higher will be the ingratitude of which it shall convict us.

They have revolted.[1] Jerome translates it, *they have despised*;[2] but it is plain enough, from many passages, that פָּשַׁע (*pashang*) means something more, namely, *revolt.* God declares, that by no acts of kindness could they be kept in a state of obedience, that they were utterly disaffected and estranged, like a son who leaves his father's house, and thus makes manifest that there remains no hope of his improvement. It is indeed a monstrous thing that children should not be obedient to their father, and to a Father who is so kind, and who gives unceasing attention to his family. Lycurgus refused to enact a law against ungrateful persons, because it was monstrously unnatural not to acknowledge a benefit received. A child who is ungrateful to his father is therefore a double monster; but a child who is ungrateful to a kind and generous father is a threefold monster. For he employs the word *children,* not for the purpose of treating them with respect, but in order to exhibit that *revolt* in a more striking manner, and in more hateful colours.

3. *The ox knoweth his owner.* This comparison marks the more strongly the criminality of the *revolt;* for the Lord might have compared his people to the Gentiles; but he is

[1] Our Author, in his Latin version of the Prophet, (see p. 33,) has rendered this word by "sceleratè egerunt in me"—"they have acted wickedly towards me;" and, in the margin, by "rebellârunt contra me,"—"have rebelled against me." Without taking notice of either of these translations, he has here introduced a third, "defecerunt"—"have revolted," for which it would be easy to produce authorities. The participle, פּוֹשְׁעִים, (*poshegnim,*) at Hosea xiv. 10. is defined by Aben Ezra (quoted by Buxtorff) to mean שׁוֹצְאִים מֵהָרְשׁוּת, (*sheyotzeim meharshoth,*) those who withdraw from authority, who set at nought, or oppose, the authority of a lawful magistrate.—*Ed.*

[2] Spreverunt.

still more severe when he compares them to dumb beasts, and pronounces them to be more stupid than the beasts are. Though beasts are destitute of reason and understanding, still they are capable of being taught; to such an extent, at least, as to recognise those who feed them. Since, therefore, God had not only fed this people at a stall, but had *nourished* them with all the kindness which is wont to be exercised by a father towards his sons, and had not only filled their bellies, but supplied them daily with spiritual food; having perceived them to be so exceedingly sluggish, he justly considers that they deserve to be taught in the school of beasts, and not of men; and therefore he sends them to the *oxen* and *asses* to learn from them what is their duty. Nor ought we to wonder at this; for the beasts frequently observe the order of nature more correctly, and display greater kindness, than men themselves.

Not to multiply instances, it will be sufficient to notice that which is here mentioned by Isaiah, that the beasts, though they are exceedingly dull and stupid, do, notwithstanding, obey their masters and those who have the charge of them. But if we choose to attend to other points in which they excel men, how many shall we discover? What is the reason why scarcely any animal is cruel to its own species, and that it recognises in another its own likeness? What is the reason why all animals commonly bestow so much care in rearing their young, while it frequently happens that mothers, forgetful of the voice of nature and of humanity, forsake their children? What is the reason why they are accustomed to take no more meat and drink than what is sufficient for sustaining their life and their strength, while men gorge themselves, and utterly ruin their constitutions? In a word, What is the reason why they do not, in any respect, transgress the laws which nature has prescribed to them?

The papists, who are accustomed to set aside the true meaning of the Scriptures, and to spoil all the mysteries of God by their own fooleries, have here contrived an absurd fable; for they have falsely alleged that the *oxen* and *asses* in the stall worshipped Christ when he was born; by which they show themselves to be egregious asses. (And indeed

I wish that they would imitate the ass which they have invented; for then they would be asses worshipping Christ, and not lifting up the heel against his divine authority.) For here the Prophet does not speak of miracles, but of the order of nature, and declares, that those who overturn that order may be regarded as monsters. We must not contrive new miracles for the purpose of adding to the authority of Christ; for, by mingling the false with the true, there is danger lest both should be disbelieved; nor can there be any doubt but that, if such a miracle had been wrought, the Evangelists would have committed it to writing.

Israel doth not know. The name *Israel*, which he contrasts with those beasts, is emphatic. We know how honourable it was for the posterity of Abraham to be known by this name, which God had bestowed on the holy patriarch, because he had vanquished the angel in wrestling. (Gen. xxxii. 28.) So much the more dishonourable was it for bastard and rebellious children to make false boasting of that honour. First, there is an implied reproof, not only because those who do not at all resemble the holy man do wrong in assuming his name, but because they are ungrateful to God, from whom they had received most valuable blessings. Secondly, there is also conveyed an indirect comparison; for the higher their rank was in being far exalted above all other nations, so much the greater disgrace is now intended to be expressed by separating them from other nations under the honourable designation of *Israel.*

The Greek translators have added the word *me;*[1] but I prefer to repeat what he had said before, *Israel doth not know* HIS OWNER, that is, God; nor *his crib*, that is, the Church, in which he had been brought up, and to which he ought to be attracted; while those beasts, on the other hand, recognise the master by whom they are nourished, and willingly return to the place where they have been fed.

4. *Ah sinful nation!*[2] Though he had already reproved their crime with sufficient severity, yet, for the purpose of

[1] Ἰσραὴλ δέ με οὐκ ἔγνω, καὶ ὁ λαός με οὐ συνῆκεν—*But Israel doth not know* ME, *and the people doth not understand* ME.

[2] This comes very near the rendering of the Septuagint, οὐαὶ ἔθνος ἁμαρτωλόν.

exposing it still more, he adds an exclamation, by which he expresses still more strongly his abhorrence of such base ingratitude and wickedness. Some are of opinion that the particle הוי (*hoi*) denotes grief; Jerome renders it *vae* (*Wo to*); but for my part I reckon it sufficent to say that it is an exclamation, suggested partly by astonishment, and partly by sorrow. For we burst into loud cries, when the disgracefulness of the action is such as cannot be expressed in plain terms, or when we want words to correspond to the depth of our grief. Where we have rendered *wicked nation*, the Greeks have translated *ἁμαρτωλὸν*, that is, *a sinner*; and such is likewise the rendering of the Vulgate. But the Hebrew word denotes those who are given up to crime; and the Prophet unquestionably charges them with abandoned wickedness.

A people laden with iniquity. The force of the metaphor ought to be observed; for not only does he mean that they are sunk in their iniquity, as in a deep mire, but he likewise brings a charge against them, that they sin, not through mistake or thoughtlessness, as frequently happens with those who are easily led astray, but that they follow out their rebellion with a firm purpose of mind; as if he had said that they were the slaves of sin, or sold to act wickedly.

When he adds, *a seed of evil-doers*, he means *a wicked seed*. Others, with greater ingenuity, consider this passage to mean, that they are declared to be unworthy of holding a place among the children of Abraham, because they are bastards, and not related to him; as they are elsewhere called the seed of Canaan, and are reproached with being *uncircumcised*, (Jer. ix. 26,) as if they had been the descendants of heathens and foreigners. But it is customary with the Hebrews to employ the phrase, "children of the good" for "good children," a mode of expression which has been imitated by the Greeks.[1]

Degenerate children. The word משחיתים (*mashchithim*)

[1] Vigerus remarks, that *παῖδες*, when construed with the genitives of nouns, denoting *artists*, *nations*, or any particular condition or profession of men, is put for the nouns themselves; and he adduces the following instances, *ῥητόρων*, *ἰατρῶν*, *φιλοσόφων*, *γραφίων παιδες*, which is far more elegant than *ῥήτορες*, &c.; and in like manner, Κελτῶν *παῖδες*, *sons of the Celts*, or, *Gauls*, that is, *Gauls*; *δυστήνων παῖδες*, *sons of the wretched*, that is, *the wretched*.—*Ed.*

literally means *corrupting*, and accordingly translators supply the word *themselves*, or, *their pursuits*. But I reckon that *degenerate* is a more appropriate rendering ; for the Prophet means that they are so depraved as to be altogether unlike their parents. The four epithets which are here bestowed by him on his nation are far from being honourable, and are widely different from the opinion which they had formed about themselves. For this is the manner in which we must arouse hypocrites ; and the more they flatter themselves, and the farther they are from being regulated by the fear of God, so much the more ought we to wield against them the thunderbolts of words. On such persons a milder form of instruction would produce no effect, and an ordinary exhortation would not move them. It is necessary, also, to remove that false conviction of their holiness, righteousness, and wisdom, which they commonly employ as a disguise, and as the ground of idle boasting.

For they have forsaken the Lord. He assigns the reason why he reproves them with such sharpness and severity. It is, that they may not complain, as they are wont to do, of being treated with excessive harshness and rigour. And first he upbraids them with that which is the source of all evils, their revolt from God ; for, as it is the highest perfection of righteousness to *cleave to* God, agreeably to those words of Moses, *Now, Israel, what doth thy God require from thee but that thou shouldst cleave to him ?*[1] so, when we have revolted from him, we are utterly ruined. The design of the Prophet is, not to convince the Jews that they are guilty of a single crime, but to show that they are wholly apostates.

The following words, *they have provoked the Holy One of Israel*, whether the word be rendered *provoke*, or *despise*, the latter of which I prefer, are undoubtedly added in order to place their sin in a still stronger light ; for it was shamefully base to treat with contempt the favour of him who had

[1] Our Author, quoting from memory, has mingled two passages: *And now, Israel, what doth the* LORD *thy God require of thee, but to fear the* LORD *thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the* LORD *thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?* (Deut. x. 12.) *Thou shalt fear the* LORD *thy God ; him shalt thou serve, and* TO HIM SHALT THOU CLEAVE, *and swear by his name.* (Deut. x. 20.)—*Ed.*

chosen them alone out of all the nations to be adopted into his family. This is also the reason why he calls himself *the Holy One of Israel;* because, by admitting them to alliance with him, he had at the same time adorned them with his *holiness;* for wherever this name occurs it is ascribed to him on account of the effect. What barbarous pride was there in *despising* so great an honour! If any one choose rather to render the word *provoke*, the meaning will be, that they rejected God, as if they expressly intended to *provoke his anger;* which shows how detestable their apostacy is.

They are gone away backward. The meaning is, that when the Lord laid down to them a fixed way and rule of living, they were hurried along by their sinful passions; but he confirms the statement which he had just now made, that their licentiousness was so unbridled that they utterly revolted from God, and deliberately turned aside from that course to which their life ought to have been directed.

5. *Why should ye be stricken any more?* Some render it, *Upon what?* or, *On what part?* and interpret the passage as if the Lord had said that he had not another scourge left; because so various are the methods by which he has attempted to bring them back to the path of duty, that no other way of chastising them remains to be tried. But I prefer to render it *Why?* because this corresponds to the Hebrew word, and agrees better with the context. It is equivalent to phrases in daily use, *To what purpose? For what object?*[1] He means that the Jews have proceeded to such a pitch of wickedness and crimes, that it is impossible to believe that chastisements will do them any good; for when desperate men have been hardened, we know that they will rather be broken to shreds than submit to correction. He complains of their prodigious obstinacy, like a physician who should declare that every remedy had been tried, and that his skill was now exhausted.

At the same time he charges them with extreme malice; for when ungodly men are not even humbled by punishments, they have arrived at the very height of wickedness; as if the Lord had said, "I see that I should do you no good if I were

[1] A quel propos? Pour quelle fin?

to chastise you ;" for although chastisements and afflictions are the remedies which God employs for curing our vices, yet, when they are found to be of no advantage to us, we are past hope. True, indeed, God does not on that account cease to punish us, but, on the contrary, his wrath against us is the more enflamed ; for such obstinacy God abhors above all things else. But he justly says that his labour is lost when he does not succeed in bringing us to repentance, and that it is useless to apply remedies to those who cannot be cured. Thus he does not fail to double their chastisements and afflictions, and to try the very utmost of what can be done, and he is even compelled to take this course until he absolutely ruin and destroy them. But in all this he does not discharge the office of a physician ; but what he laments is, that the chastisements which he inflicts will be of no avail to his people.

You will yet grow more faithless. It is a confirmation of the former statement, and therefore I separate it from the former clause, though there are some who put them together. It is as if he had said, "Still you will not cease to practise treachery ; yea, you will add to your crimes ; for I perceive that you rush to the commission of iniquity, as if you had leagued and banded yourselves for that purpose, so that we can no longer hope that you will slacken in your course." The design of God is to exhibit their incorrigible disposition, that they may be left without excuse.

The whole head is sick. Others translate it *every head*, and suppose that those terms denote the princes and nobles of the nation. I rather agree with the opinion of those who render it *the whole* head ; for I consider it to be a plain comparison taken from the human body, to this effect, that the body is so severely afflicted that there is no hope of returning health. He points out two principal parts on which the health of the body depends, and thus shows the extent of the disease which, he tells us, has infected this wretched people to such a degree that they are wasting away ; that the disease exists not in a single member, or in the extremities of the body, but that *the heart* itself has been wounded, and *the head* is severely afflicted ; in short, that the vital

parts, as they are called, are so much injured and corrupted that it is impossible to heal them.

But here also commentators differ; for some of them view this state of disease as referring to sins, and others to punishments. Those who view it as referring to sins interpret it thus: "You are like a rotten and stinking body, in which no part is sound or healthy. Crimes of the worst description prevail amongst you, by the infection of which every thing is corrupted and debased." But I choose rather to interpret it as referring to punishments; for unquestionably God still proceeds with this complaint, that the nation is so obstinate as to be incapable of being cured by any chastisements, because, though it has been beaten almost to death, or at least has been maimed and frightfully torn by repeated blows, still it is not reformed. Such too is the import of—

6. *From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.* Here he proceeds with the same comparison, and repeats the same statement; for certainly those who explain the former part of the verse, as referring to punishments, do not sufficiently consider the remaining part of the context. If we shall admit that a nation corrupted by vices is compared to a diseased body, what is the meaning of the words which immediately follow, that *the wounds have not been bound up or mollified with ointment?* It is plain that the Prophet speaks of afflictions by which the nation had almost wasted away, and that he adduces this long-continued weakness as a proof of hardened impenitence. He calls it a *putrifying sore*, from which diseased matter is continually flowing, as if some concealed fountain were perpetually sending forth an additional supply of venom. By this comparison he shows that the wound is incurable, because that supply cannot be stopped. All this is prodigiously heightened by affirming that no remedies have been applied; for the three metaphors which he joins together—*they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment*—have all the same meaning, that the nation, without any hope of relief, without comfort, without remedy, is reduced to such a state of distress, that in such punishments the utmost severity of God is openly displayed.

7. *Your country is desolate.* Literally, it is *desolation;* and thus Isaiah goes on to speak more fully and plainly of what he had already said figuratively about chastisements, that the country has been reduced to a frightful state of devastation: for I choose to interpret all those statements as relating to past occurrences, because the Prophet does not threaten the vengeance of God, but describes those heavy calamities which have already happened. He upbraids them with indolence and stupidity in remaining unmoved by their afflictions.

Like the destruction of strangers.[1] This is added for the sake of heightening the picture; for the opinion that זָרִים (*zārim*) is here put for זָרֶם (*zerem*), *an inundation*, is far-fetched. That word might no doubt be applied to enemies, but it is better to take it as literally denoting *foreigners.* The calamity is more grievous when it is brought on by men who are unknown, and who have come from a distant country, who lay waste with far greater recklessness and cruelty than neighbouring tribes. Such men destroy cities, burn houses, buildings, and villages, and spread desolation all around. In short, they rush forward with barbarous ferocity, bent on murders and conflagrations, and are more eager to inflict damage than to make gain. But neighbours, when they have subdued a country, can retain possession of it by having a garrison, and as soon as a revolt is attempted, or an insurrection takes place, can send additional troops; and there-

[1] In the English version it runs, *as overthrown by strangers;* and the marginal reading, adhering more closely to the Hebrew idiom, is, *as the overthrow of strangers.* The interpretation rejected by CALVIN has been approved by some able critics; and Lowth, distrusting the philological views given by his predecessors, has resorted to a conjectural alteration of the Hebrew text:—"This reading, though confirmed by all the ancient versions, gives us no good sense; for *your land is devoured by strangers, and is desolate as if overthrown by strangers,* is a mere tautology, or, what is as bad, an identical comparison. Aben Ezra thought that the word, in its present form, might be taken for the same with זֶרֶם, *an inundation.* Schultens is of the same opinion, (see Taylor's Concord;) and Schindler, in his Lexicon, explains it in the same manner; and so, says Kimchi, some explain it." After enumerating the attempts of Abendana "to reconcile it to grammatical analogy," he adds, "but I rather suppose the true reading to be זֶרֶם, and have translated it accordingly: the word זָרִים, in the line above, seems to have caught the transcriber's eye, and to have led him into this mistake."—*Notes on Isaiah.—Ed.*

fore they are not so cruel; nor do they lay waste a country from which they hope to derive some advantage. It is therefore no ordinary calamity, but the most shocking of all calamities, that is here described.

Hence we ought to learn that, when God begins to punish us, if we do not repent, he does not immediately desist, but multiplies the chastisements, and continually follows them up with other afflictions. We ought therefore to abstain from such obstinacy, if we do not wish to draw down upon ourselves the same punishments, or at least to deserve the same reproach which was brought against the Jews, that though they had received sharp warnings, and had felt the hand of God, still they could not be corrected or reformed.

Moreover, we ought not to wonder that we are visited with so great an amount and variety of afflictions, of which we see no end or limit, for by our obstinacy we fight with God and with his stripes. It must therefore happen with us as with wincing and unruly horses, which, the more obstinate and refractory they are, have the whip and spur applied to them with greater severity. In the present day there are many who almost accuse God of cruelty, as if he always treated us with harshness, and as if he ought to chastise us more gently; but they do not take into account our shocking crimes. If those crimes were duly weighed by them, they would assuredly acknowledge that, amidst the utmost severity, the forbearance of God is wonderful; and that we may not think that in this case the Lord was too severe, we must take into consideration the vices which he afterwards enumerates.

Here an objection will be started. Why does Isaiah declare that the nation endured such a variety of afflictions, while we have already mentioned that he began to prophesy under Uzziah,[1] during whose reign the kingdom of Judah was in a prosperous condition? (2 Chron. xxvi. 5-15.) For although, towards the end of his life, the kingdom of Israel met with some disasters, still this did not affect the kingdom of Judah. Accordingly, the Jews think that these words relate to the reign of Jotham, (2 Kings xv. 32,) and not of Uzziah. Their opinion appears at first sight to have little

[1] Called also Azariah, 2 Kings xv. 1.—*Ed.*

weight; and yet, when the whole matter is examined, it is not destitute of probability; for we know that the prophets did not always attend to chronological arrangement in collecting their prophecies; and it is possible that this discourse of Isaiah was placed first in order for no other reason but because it contains a summary view of that doctrine which is afterwards to be delivered.

Others think that they can easily get rid of the difficulty by interpreting the whole passage as a description of vice, and not of punishments; but what is said about the burning of cities and about the desolation of the country cannot easily be disposed of in that manner. If it be supposed that the Prophet speaks of the future and not the present condition of that kingdom, and that in the name of God he foretells approaching calamities, though they did not behold them with their eyes, I do not greatly object to that view, though it is probable that he treats of events which were known to them. It is a real narrative, and not a prediction, though in the next verse I acknowledge he announces the approaching result.

8. *And the daughter of Zion shall be left*[1] *as a cottage in a vineyard.* He alludes to a custom which exists in France, that the vinekeepers rear *a cottage* for themselves when the grapes begin to ripen. His next comparison, which is closely allied to the former, is taken from a custom of that nation of protecting also *gardens of cucumbers*[2] by means of men who kept watch during the night. He next explains what he intended to convey by both comparisons.

Like a besieged city. This may be explained in two ways;

[1] Residua manebit.

[2] A lively French traveller, Tavernier, who flourished about the middle of the seventeenth century, in describing the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, gives the following account:—"There we see large beds of *melons* and of *cucumbers*, but especially of the latter, of which the inhabitants of the Levant are particularly fond. Most frequently they eat them without peeling, and afterwards drink a glass of water. Throughout the whole of Asia this is the ordinary food of the common people for three or four months. The whole family lives on it; and when a child asks for something to eat, instead of giving it bread, as in France and other places is the custom, in the Levant they offer it a *cucumber*, which it eats raw just as it has been fresh pulled. *Cucumbers* in the Levant have a peculiarly excellent flavour, and though they are eaten raw they never do any injury."—*Ed.*

either that the whole country will be wasted, with the solitary exception of the *city*, which shall be left standing like *a cottage*, or that the city itself will be destroyed. The former interpretation is adopted by the Jews, and they understand this passage to relate to the siege of Sennacherib; but I think that it has a wider signification, and embraces other calamities which followed afterwards. This may indeed refer to the neighbouring country, from the misery and devastation of which it was impossible but that the city should sustain much damage; but I consider the Prophet's meaning to be, that the evils of which he speaks shall reach even to *the city* itself, until, broken and ruined, it shall wear the aspect of a mean *cottage*.

The daughter of Zion is the name here given to Jerusalem, in accordance with what is customary in Scripture to give the designation of *daughter* to any nation, in the same manner as *the daughter of Babylon* (Isa. xlvii. 1) and *the daughter of Tyre* (Psalm xlv. 12) are names given to the Tyrians and Babylonians. *Zion* is the name here employed rather than *Jerusalem*, on account of the dignity of the temple; and this figure of speech, by which a part is taken for the whole, is frequently employed.

9. *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us.* Here he concludes what he had formerly declared concerning God's chastisements, that the desolation which shall take place—or rather which is present, and which they now behold—may be compared to the destruction of *Sodom*, were it not that the Lord snatched as it were from the burning *a very small remnant*. And this verse confirms what I formerly said, that the Prophet's description of the calamities which had already taken place is interwoven with those events which were immediately at hand, as if he had said, Be not deceived by flatteries; you would be in the same condition that Sodom and Gomorrah now are, were it not that God, in compassion on you, has preserved *a remnant*. This agrees with the words of Jeremiah, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.* (Lam. iii. 22.)

Hence we ought to observe two things. First, the Prophet here describes utter destruction; and yet, because God had

to deal with his Church and his beloved people, that judgment is mitigated by special grace, so that out of the general ruin of the whole nation God rescues his people, whom he justly compares to *a very small remnant.* But if God punished the crimes of the Jews by such dreadful chastisements, let us consider that we may share the same fate if we imitate their rebellion: for God had set apart that nation for himself, and had distinguished them from the ordinary lot of other men. Why then should he spare us if we shall be hardened in our ungodliness and treachery? Or rather, what is likely to be the result of that mass and sink of crimes in which men throughout the whole world give way to their passions? Unquestionably it will be the same with the fate of *Sodom and Gomorrah,* unless his vengeance shall be restrained by a regard to that gracious covenant in which he promised that the Church shall be eternal; and this threatening, which is truly awful and alarming, is applicable to all obstinate and incurable men, whose vices no punishments can destroy or weaken.

Again, we ought to observe that saying of Jeremiah, which I have already glanced at, that it must be attributed to the tender mercies of God that we are not altogether destroyed. (Lam. iii. 22.) For if we shall consider the vast amount of wickedness which prevails among all classes, we shall wonder that even a single individual is left, and that all have not been removed from the land of the living; and in this way God *withdraws his hand,* (Ezek. xx. 22,) that there may be some Church preserved in the world. This is the reason assigned by Paul, who is the best interpreter of this passage, when, by quoting it, he represses the haughtiness of the Jews, that they may not boast of the mere name, as if it had been enough that they were descended from the fathers; for he reminds them that God could act towards them as he had formerly done towards the fathers, but that through his tender mercies *a remnant shall be saved.* (Rom. ix. 27.) And why? That the Church may not utterly perish; for it is through the favour which he bears towards it that the Lord, though our obstinacy lays him under the necessity of trying the severest judgments, still reserves some small *seed.* (Rom.

ix. 29.) This statement ought to yield us powerful consolation even in those heaviest calamities in which we are apt to think that it is all over with the Church; that, though everything should go into confusion, and the world, as we say, be turned upside down, we may persevere with unshaken fortitude, and may rest assured that God will always be mindful of his Church.

A very small remnant. This clause may be connected either with what goes before or with what follows, and accordingly some render it, *We would have been almost like Sodom.* But I prefer connecting it with the former clause, so as to deduce that the number which God had *reserved* out of the destruction is *small.* Some think that כ (*caph*) is here used affirmatively, so as to express the matter more strongly; and I have no objection to that view, though we may take it in its natural and literal signification, as if he had said, "and that shall be a small number." This declaration ought to be carefully observed; for if the Church does not spread far and wide, men are wont to despise her. Hence it comes that hypocrites are proud of their numbers; and weak men, terrified by the pompous display of those numbers, stagger. We also learn from it that we ought not to judge by the largeness of the number, unless we choose to prefer the chaff to the wheat, because the quantity is greater; but we ought to be satisfied with knowing that, though the number of the godly be small, still God acknowledges them as his chosen people; and we ought also to call to remembrance that consolatory saying, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* (Luke xii. 32.)

10. *Hear the word of the Lord.* He confirms what he had formerly said, that the Lord's vengeance is not cruel; because they deserved far more severe punishment. For although there was a difference between them and the inhabitants of *Sodom* as to punishment, yet their guilt was the same; so that equal punishment might have been inflicted, if the Lord had not spared them. It amounts to this, that, if they have received milder treatment, it is not because they have sinned less heinously than the inhabitants of *Sodom,* but it must be ascribed to the mercy of God.

When he gives to the *rulers* the name of *Sodom*, and distinguishes the *people* by the name of *Gomorrah*, this does not point out that there is a difference, but rather that their condition is alike. But by repeating the same thing twice, the diversity of the names lends additional elegance; as if he had said, that there is no greater difference between the *rulers* and the *people* than there is between *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. There is, no doubt, an allusion to the various ranks of men, by assigning to them, separately, as it were, two cities; but as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* mean the same thing, we perceive that he throws them, as it were, into one bundle. In short, the meaning is, "If any one shall form an opinion about the *people* and the *rulers*, he will find that there is as close a resemblance between them as between *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, or between one egg and another; for no one part is more sound than any other part."

The Prophet begins with stripping the Jews of their disguises, and justly; for while all hypocrites are accustomed to employ strange coverings for concealing themselves from view, that nation was particularly addicted to this vice, and on no subject did the prophets contend with them more keenly or fiercely. Along with their vaunting about pretended holiness pride also reigned, and they boasted of the grandeur and excellency of their nation as much as of ceremonies and outward worship. So much the more were they offended at the great harshness with which Isaiah addressed them. But it was necessary to drag their wickedness from their lurking places, and therefore the more haughty their demeanour, the greater is the vehemence with which the Prophet thunders against them. In the same manner ought we to deal with all hypocrites.

The word of the Lord. The Prophet takes the *word* and the *law* for the same thing; and yet I fully believe that he purposely employed the term *law*, in order to glance at their absurd opinion; because, by imagining that the offering of sacrifices, unaccompanied by faith and repentance, can appease God, they put an absurd interpretation on the *law*. By these words he reminded them that, by quoting Moses to them, he introduces nothing new and makes no addition

to the *law;* that it is only necessary for them to *hear* what the will of God is; and that on this subject he will faithfully instruct them. Lest they should suppose that, by an unfounded belief of their own righteousness, they can deceive God, he likewise reminds them that the *law* gives no countenance to them in this matter.

11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?* Isaiah now introduces God as speaking, for the purpose of making known his own meaning; for it belongs to a lawgiver not only to issue commands, but likewise to give a sound interpretation to the laws, that they may not be abused. Beyond all doubt, the former reproof was exceedingly unpalatable and oppressive to them; for what language expressive of stronger disapprobation or abhorrence could have been employed? They gloried in the name of Abraham, boasted that they were his children, and on this ground maintained a haughty demeanour. This is the reason why the Prophet arms himself with the authority of God against them; as if he had said, "Know that it is not with me but with God that you have to do."

Next he explains the intention and design of God in demanding sacrifices; that he does so, not because he sets a high value on them, but in order that they may be aids to piety; and, consequently, that the Jews were greatly mistaken who made all their holiness to consist of those services. For they thought that they had performed their duty admirably well when they offered sacrifices of slain beasts; and when the prophets demanded something beyond this, they complained that they were treated harshly. Now the Lord says that he rejects and abhors them, which may appear to be excessive severity, for it was by him that they were appointed. But it ought to be observed that some of the commandments of God ought to be obeyed on their own account, while others of them have a remoter object. For instance, the law enjoins us to serve and worship God, and next enjoins us to do good to our neighbours. (Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.) These things are in themselves acceptable to God, and are demanded on their own account. The case is different with ceremonies; for they are performances which

are not demanded on their own account, but for a different reason. The same thing may be said of fasting; *for the kingdom of God does not consist in meat and drink;* (Rom. xiv. 17;) and therefore fasting is directed to another object.

It follows, therefore, that ceremonies were not appointed in such a manner as if they were a satisfaction by which he should be appeased, but in order that by means of them the nation might be trained to godliness, and might make greater and greater progress in faith and in the pure worship of God. But hypocrites observe them with the most scrupulous care, as if the whole of religion turned on this point, and think that they are the most devout of all men, when they have long and anxiously wearied themselves in observing them. And that they may be thought more devout, they likewise add something of their own, and daily contrive new inventions, and most wickedly abuse the holy ordinances of God, by not keeping in view their true object. All their ceremonies, therefore, are nothing else than corruptions of the worship of God. For when their whole attention is given to the outward and naked performance, in what respect do their sacrifices differ from the sacrifices of the Gentiles, which, we know, were full of sacrilege, because they had no regard to a lawful end?

This is the reason why the Lord rejects those ceremonies, though they had been appointed by his authority, because the nation did not consider the object and purpose for which they were enjoined. The unceasing contest between the prophets and the nation was to tear off these masks, and to show that the Lord is not satisfied with merely outward worship, and cannot be appeased by ceremonies. In all places godly ministers have experience of the same kind of conflicts; for men always form their estimate of God from themselves, and think that he is satisfied with outward display, but cannot without the greatest difficulty be brought to offer to him the integrity of their heart.

All the perplexity of this passage will be easily removed by Jeremiah, who says, *When I redeemed your fathers out of Egypt, I did not order them to offer sacrifices to me; I*

only enjoined them to hear me and to keep my commandments. (Jer. vii. 22.) For he shows that the observance of ceremonies depends wholly on the word, and that it is as idle and unprofitable to separate them from the word as it would be for the soul to be parted from the body. To this also belongs the argument in Psalm l. 12, 13,—*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the Most High.* And in another passage the same Jeremiah says, *Trust not in words of falsehood, saying, The temple of the* LORD, *the temple of the* LORD, *the temple of the* LORD *are we. But rather excel in doing good,* &c. (Jer. vii. 4.) The Prophet Micah likewise says, *Doth the* LORD *take pleasure in thousands of rams, or in ten thousand rivers of oil?* Immediately afterwards he adds, *I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the* LORD *requireth from thee, namely, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* (Micah vi. 7, 8.)

From these passages it is evident that the reason why ceremonies are condemned is, that they are separated from the word as from their soul. Hence we see how great is the blindness of men, who cannot be convinced that all the pains they take to worship God are of no advantage unless they flow from integrity of heart. Nor is this vice confined to the common people, but is found in almost all men; and in those who in their opinion excel all others. Hence springs the notion of the efficacy which belongs to the mere performance of the outward act—or, as they call it, the *opus operatum*—which Popish doctors have contrived, and which at the present day keeps a firm hold of the minds of many. Now here it is not man but God himself who speaks, and who pronounces, by an unchangeable decree, that all that men do is in vain offered for his acceptance, is empty and unprofitable, unless they call upon him with true faith.

12. *Who hath required this at your hand?* What an admirable confutation of false worship, when God declares that they will not come before him according to the appointed manner, and makes a general declaration, that in vain do they offer to him anything which he does not require; for he does not choose to be worshipped in any other

way than that which has been enjoined! For how comes it that men are so highly delighted with those inventions, but because they do not consider that all their services are neither profitable to themselves nor acceptable to God? Otherwise they would immediately recollect that obedience is all that remains for them to do; (1 Sam. xv. 22;) and they would not so insolently vaunt of their exertions, which the Lord looks upon with scorn, not only because he derives no advantage from it, but because he does not wish that men should attribute to him what they have rashly undertaken without his authority, or suffer the caprice of men to pass for a law. Yet in order to express still stronger contempt, he immediately adds, that they improperly give the name of *obedience* to that which he considers to be labour thrown away; namely, that their close attendance at the temple amounts to nothing more than treading its pavements; as if, in reference to their hypocritical prayers, he had said, "Truly they lay me under deep obligations by stunning my ears."

13. *Bring no more vain oblations.* This is a useful admonition for restraining the irregular desires of those who do not cease to follow inveterately unmeaning and hypocritical worship, that, warned by God, they may at length repent, if they would listen to any advice. But hence we learn how hard it is to shake the false confidence of hypocrites, when they have once been hardened, since they cannot even endure to hear God plainly warning them not to go on in losing their pains, and in the practice of such madness.

Incense is an abomination to me. To press them more closely, he proceeds farther, and declares that such worship is not only unprofitable, but even that he detests and abhors it; and justly, because the profanation of the worship of God, in which his name is falsely employed, is not free from sacrilege. For as nothing is more dear to God than his own glory, so there is nothing which he more strongly detests than to have it infringed by any kind of corruptions: and this is done, when any sort of unmeaning service is put in the room of true worship. The meaning of this passage has been mistaken by some, who have thought that the Prophet

speaks of the repeal of the law; for that is not his object, but he recalls the people of his time to the right manner of observing ceremonies, and shows with what design and for what purpose they were instituted. For since the beginning of the world the worship of God was spiritual, and the diversity of our worship from that which prevailed under the Old Testament had a reference to men, but not to God. In God there is no change, (James i. 17,) but he accommodates himself to the weakness of men. That kind of government therefore was suitable to the Jews, just as a preparatory training[1] is needed for children. For what purpose they were instituted, and what is the right manner of observing ceremonies, he now describes.

14. *Your new-moons.* The Prophet adds nothing new to his former doctrine; but with respect to all ceremonies, in which there is no spiritual truth, but only the glare of a false pretence, he declares generally that they are not merely useless but wicked. Hence we ought to observe that we labour to no purpose, if we do not worship God in the right manner, and as God himself enjoins. In all things God delights in truth, but especially in the worship due to his majesty. Besides, not only do we lose our labour, but the worship of God (as we have already said) is perverted; and nothing can be more wicked than this. Now all superstitions are so many corruptions of the worship of God; it follows, therefore, that they are wicked and unlawful.

Superstition may be viewed, either in itself, or in the disposition of the mind. *In itself,* when men have the audacity to contrive what God has not commanded. Such are those actions which spring from *will-worship,* (ἐθελοθρησκεία, Col. ii. 23,) which is commonly called devotion. One man shall set up an idol, another shall build a chapel, another shall appoint annual festivals, and innumerable things of the same nature. When men venture to take such liberties as to invent new modes of worship, that is superstition. *In the disposition of the mind,* when men imitate those services which

[1] *Pædagogia.* In what sense our Author uses this term may be gathered from his Commentary on Gal. iii. 24. *The law was our* SCHOOLMASTER (παιδαγωγός) *to Christ.—Ed.*

are lawful and of which God approves, but keep their whole attention fixed on the outward form, and do not attend to their object or truth. In this manner the Jews earnestly adhered to the ceremonies which Moses had enjoined, but left out what was of the greatest importance; for they paid no regard to a pure conscience, never mentioned faith and repentance, had no knowledge of their guilt, and—what was still worse—separated Christ from them, and left no room for the truth. This plainly shows, as I have already stated, that it was a spurious and deceitful mask; so that their sacrifices did not at all differ from the sacrifices of the Gentiles. It is therefore not wonderful that the Lord calls them *abomination.*

I shall not stay to notice the phrases here used, which are various; and yet they ought not to be lightly passed over. For the Lord perceives how great is the wantonness of men in contriving modes of worship; and therefore he heaps up a variety of expressions, that he may more powerfully restrain that wantonness, and again declares that those actions are hateful to him. Moreover, because men flatter themselves, and foolishly entertain the belief that the Lord will hold in some estimation the idle contrivances which they have framed, he declares, on the contrary, that he regards them with detestation and abhorrence.

15. *When ye spread forth your hands.* The ancient custom of *spreading forth the hands* in prayer did not arise from superstition; nor did that practice, like many others, obtain currency through foolish and idle ambition; but because nature herself prompts men to declare, even by outward signs, that they betake themselves to God. Accordingly, since they cannot fly to him, they raise themselves by this sign. No injunction, certainly, respecting this sign, was given to the fathers; but they used it as men divinely inspired; and by this very sign all idolaters are convicted of gross blindness; for, while they declare by an outward attitude that they betake themselves to God, in reality they betake themselves to idols. In order to convict them more strongly, the Lord permitted the uninterrupted use of this custom to continue among them. The Prophet, therefore,

does not condemn the *spreading forth of the hands,* but their hypocrisy; because they assumed the appearance of men who called on God, while in their heart they were wholly averse to him, as he elsewhere declares more fully that *this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.* (Chap. xxix. 13.) The Lord saith that he is *nigh,* but it is *to those who call upon him in truth.* (Ps. cxlv. 18.) Where hypocrisy is, there can be no true calling on God. And yet this passage does not contradict what is said elsewhere, "When they shall spread forth their hands, I will hear."[1] For in that passage the Lord speaks of that *calling* which proceeds from confidence in him. Faith is the mother of calling on God; and if that be absent, nothing is left but empty mockery.

Yea, when ye make many prayers. He amplifies the former statement by threatening that he will be deaf to their cries, to whatever extent they may multiply prayers; as if he had said, "Though you be constant in prayer, that diligence will be of no avail to you." For this also is a fault which belongs to hypocrites, that the more their prayers abound in words, they think that they are more holy, and will more easily obtain what they wish. Thus their idle talkativeness is indirectly rebuked.

Your hands are full of blood. Here he begins to explain more fully the reason why he disapproves, and even disdainfully rejects, both their prayers and their sacrifices. It is because they are cruel and bloody, and stained with crimes of every sort, though they come into his presence with hypocritical display. Though he will afterwards add other kinds of crime, yet as he had mentioned the *spreading forth of the*

[1] Our Author seems to allude to Isaiah lxv. 24, *It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* This conjecture is confirmed by the remarks which immediately follow on the word *call,* as the leading word in the passage. It appears to have escaped his recollection, that in this instance the *spreading forth of the hands* is not mentioned, though it occurs in an analogous passage of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple—*What prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man,* when he shall *spread forth his hands in this house; then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place.* 2 Chr. vi. 29, 30.—*Ed.*

hands, so he speaks of the *hands*, and says that in them they carry and hold out a testimony of their crimes, so that they need not wonder that he thrusts them back so harshly. For, on the other hand, the phrase, *to lift up clean hands*, was employed not only by prophets and apostles, (1 Tim. ii. 8,) but even by profane authors, who were driven by mere instinct to reprove the stupidity of men; if it were not that God perhaps forced them to make this confession, in order that true religion might never be without some kind of attestation.

And yet the Prophet does not mean that they were robbers or murderers, but reproves the tricks and deceit by which they obtained possession of the property of others. God judges in a different manner from men; for the hidden tricks and wicked arts, by which wicked men are accustomed to deceive and take advantage of the more simple, are not taken into account by men; or if they are taken into account, they are at least extenuated, and are not estimated according to their just weight. But God, dragging forth to light those very men of dazzling reputation, who under specious pretences had been in the habit of concealing their unjust practices, plainly declares that they are murderers. For in whatever way you kill a man, whether you cut his throat or take away his food and the necessaries of life, you are a murderer. Consequently, God does not speak of men who are openly wicked, or whose crimes have made them openly infamous, but of those who wished to be thought good men, and who kept up some kind of reputation.

This circumstance ought to be carefully observed; for on the same grounds must we now deal with wicked men, who oppress the poor and feeble by fraud and violence, or some kind of injustice, and yet cloak their wickedness by plausible disguise. But with whatever impudence they may exclaim that they do not resemble thieves or assassins, we must reprove them with the same severity which the Prophet employed towards persons of the same stamp; for when we speak in the name of God, we must not judge according to the views and opinions of men, but must boldly declare the judgment which the Lord hath pronounced.

16. *Wash you, make you clean.* He exhorts the Jews to repentance, and points out the true way of it, provided that they wish to have their obedience approved by God. Hence we conclude that nothing can please God, unless it proceed from a pure conscience; for God does not, like men, judge of our works according to their outward appearance. It frequently happens that some particular action, though performed by a very wicked man, obtains applause among men; but in the sight of God, who beholds the heart, a depraved conscience pollutes every virtue. And this is what is taught by Haggai, holding out an illustration drawn from the ancient ceremonies, that *everything which an unclean person has touched is polluted;* from which he concludes that nothing *clean* proceeds from the wicked. Our Prophet has already declared, that in vain do they offer sacrifices to God, in vain do they pray, in vain do they call on his name, if integrity of heart do not sanctify the outward worship. For this reason, in order that the Jews may no longer labour to no purpose, he demands that *cleanness;* and he begins with a general reformation, lest, after having discharged one part of their duty, they should imagine that this would be a veil to conceal them from the eyes of God.

Such is the manner in which we ought always to deal with men who are estranged from God. We must not confine our attention to one or a few sores of a diseased body; but if we aim at a true and thorough cure, we must call on them to begin anew, and must thoroughly remove the contagion, that they who were formerly hateful and abominable in the sight of God may begin to please God. By the metaphor *washing,* he unquestionably exhorts to remove inward pollution, but shortly afterwards he will also add the fruits of actions.

When he bids them *wash,* he does not mean that men repent by their own exercise of free-will; but he shows that there is no other remedy but this, that they shall appear pure in the sight of God. Now, we know that the sacred writers attribute to men what is wrought in them by the Spirit of God, whom Ezekiel calls *clean water,* because to him belongs the work of repentance. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.)

Put away the evil of your doings. The Prophet now comes to describe the fruits of repentance; for not only does he explain without a metaphor what it is to *wash* and to be *cleansed*, but he enjoins them to exhibit in their whole life, and in every action, the evidence of their being renewed. Yet he confirms the former statement, that the pollution of the people is *before the eyes* of God, that it stains and debases all their actions, and thus makes it impossible that they shall be pleasing in his sight. And he particularly mentions *the eyes of God*, lest, when they employed a veil to hinder themselves from seeing, they should vainly imagine that God shared with them in their blindness.

Cease to do evil. He still proceeds to reprove their manner of life. This passage is commonly interpreted as if by *doing ill* the Prophet meant *living ill;* but it ought strictly to be understood as denoting those crimes by which a neighbour is injured; so that in the exhortation, *Learn to do well*, which occurs in the next verse, the expression *to your neighbour* ought to be supplied; for he speaks of the injuries and kind offices which we perform to our neighbours. Now since repentance has its seal in the heart of man, he describes it by those outward appearances by means of which it is, in some measure, brought before the eyes of men. There is no man who does not wish to be reckoned a good man; but the true character of every man is manifested by his actions. He therefore calls them to the performance of those outward actions by which they may give evidence of their repentance.

He comprehends under two heads the fruits of repentance, *ceasing to do evil*, and *doing well.* First, we must *cease* to commit every act of injustice; for we must not imitate those spendthrifts who wish to be thought bountiful, and fraudulently take from one person what they bestow on another. Again, we must not resemble those idle people who think that they have done enough, if they have kept themselves from doing harm, and from invading the property of their neighbours, but are not careful to perform acts of kindness. He intended, therefore, to include both; for under those two heads the keeping of the second table of the law is comprehended.

17. *Learn to do well.* As he had just now, in enjoining them to *cease to do evil*, charged them with the continual practice of iniquity, as if he had said that their whole life was a constant habit of sinning; so now he enjoins them to become skilled in acts of kindness, and in entreating them to *learn* this, he addresses them as scholars who had not yet learned their earliest lessons. And first he bids them *seek judgment.* Others render it, INQUIRE RESPECTING *judgment*, of which I do not approve; for by the word *seek* the Prophet meant more than this, he meant what we call the actual practice of it. By the word *judgment* he denotes what is good and right; as if he had said, "Aim at uprightness."

Relieve the oppressed. The Prophet, after his wonted manner, adds to the general description the mention of particular classes; and although he has already given a special exhortation to kindness and justice, yet wishing to press them more closely, he enters into a more careful enumeration of certain classes, so as to present a more complete view of the subject. For otherwise men always wish to be reckoned good and righteous, and can scarcely be moved by general instruction; but when we come to particular cases, they are forced, as it were, to deal with the matter in hand, and are compelled to yield, or at least become more tractable, of which we have daily experience.

Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. The Prophet here selects two classes, by means of which the wickedness of men is more fully exposed; for it seldom happens that the causes of the *fatherless and widows* are defended, because men do not expect from them any rewards. To such an extent are they exposed to every kind of injustice, that no man comes forward in defence of them, because there is no man who follows justice on its own account; and not only so, but there is a very great number of persons who are ready to plunder the poor and needy. This proves that there is no one who cares about exercising judgment; for we need not at all wonder that men of wealth and influence have friends to assist them, who are excited and allured by the expectation of reward. But the Lord declares that he

takes charge of *the fatherless and widows,* and will avenge them if they shall sustain any injury. *Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry: and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.* (Exod. xxii. 22-24.) The same declaration is now extended to all others, who are oppressed and groan under the violence and lawless passions of men of rank and influence.

This ought to yield the highest consolation to all the children of God, who are enjoined to *possess their souls in patience.* (Luke xxi. 19.) Whatever may be the haughty boasting of enemies, this will not prevent the people of God from glorying amidst their tribulations, while such considerations as these shall have an abiding place in their minds: "The Lord will be our avenger. Though men disregard us, he takes care of us. He will aid the destitute, and will defend their cause."

18. *Come now, and let us reason together.*[1] The Hebrew word נָא (*na*) is commonly translated *I pray,* or *therefore;* but I think that it denotes the confidence of a good cause, and thus is an exhortation, *Come.* For the Lord declares that the Jews will have nothing to reply, and that, even though they obtain an opportunity of clearing themselves, they will still be speechless. And certainly this is the way in which hypocrites ought to be treated; for they boldly enter into disputes with God, and there is no end of their reasonings. Accordingly, he tells them that, if they choose to debate, he will be equally prepared on the other side.

The question will perhaps be put, Why does the Prophet speak chiefly about the second table of the law, and not rather about the worship of God? For we know that there were good reasons why God assigned the foremost place to the first table, when he divided the law; and there can be no doubt that, as it comes first in order, so it is likewise of

[1] ונוכחה (*venivvakechah*), *and let us settle our dispute.—Bishop Stock.* "Both of us, I and you, that we may ascertain which of us has committed an offence against the other; and if you have sinned against me, still I hope to convert you."—*Jarchi.*

greater importance. I reply, when the Prophets reprove the hypocrisy of men, they employ various modes of address. Sometimes they complain that the Sabbath has been profaned; sometimes they say that men do not call on God; but for the most part they censure idolatry, and raise their voice against superstitions. But here Isaiah complains that their duties towards their neighbours have not been performed.

Still in all these cases the object is the same, to show that our actions are of no value in the sight of God, when they do not proceed from a good conscience, and when we are destitute of the fear of God. This fear they sometimes denote by "calling on the name of God," sometimes by "keeping the Sabbath," and sometimes by other actions; but as the distinction between true worship and hypocrisy is most clearly and manifestly pointed out by means of the duties of brotherly kindness, there are good reasons why the mention of those duties is brought forward by Isaiah. For hypocrites are careful to perform outward worship and ceremonies; but inwardly they are full of envy, they swell with pride and contempt of the brethren, they burn with covetousness and ambition; and while they conceal themselves under those masks, they cannot easily be detected. They must, therefore, be tried by this rule, as by a touchstone, and thus it must be ascertained whether or not they fear God.

We might, indeed, be deceived, were it from the second table only that we formed our judgment about the godliness of a man; but if any one discharge the duties of the first table, which are evidences of godliness and of the worship of God, he must then be brought to this standard, Does he act inoffensively towards other men? Does he abstain from every act of injustice? Does he speak truth? Does he live in the exercise of kindness to his brethren? This is the reason why Christ pronounces *mercy, judgment, and faith*, to be *the weighty matters of the law*, (Matt. xxiii. 23,) and censures the Pharisees because, in their eagerness about tithes and offerings, they attended only to smaller matters, and neglected true righteousness. By *faith* he means fidelity, or what we

commonly call *loyalty.*[1] By *judgment* he means every kind of uprightness, when we render to every man what belongs to him, and do not allow others to be injured, but assist them, as far as lies in our power.

But if these are *the weighty matters of the law,* in what order ought we to place the commandments of the second table? I answer, they retain their due importance and order; but by means of those duties which Christ so rigidly demands, and on which he dwells so largely, hypocrisy is more fully detected, and we are better enabled to judge whether a man sincerely fears God or not. In the same sense ought we to understand that passage, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice;* (Hos. vi. 6; Matt. ix. 13;) for *mercy* is an evidence and proof of true godliness. Again, it is pleasing to God, because it is a true demonstration of the love which we owe to our fellow-men; but *sacrifices* are pleasing to him for a different reason. It is now, I think, sufficiently plain why the Prophet Isaiah mentions kindness rather than faith or calling upon God; and why the prophets employ such variety in their modes of address, when they endeavour to bring back hypocrites to the true worship of God, and when they bid them show it by its fruits.

Though your sins be as scarlet. It is as if he had said, that he does not accuse innocent persons, and has no wish to enter into controversy; so that the charges which he makes against them are not brought forward or maintained without strong necessity. For hypocrites are wont to find fault with God, as if he were too severe, and could not be at all appeased. They go still farther, and discover this excuse for their obstinacy, that it is in vain for them to attempt to return to a state of favour with God. If every other expedient fail, still they fly to this, that it is not proper to make such rigid demands on them, and that even the very best of men have something that needs to be forgiven. The Prophet anticipates the objection, by introducing the Lord speaking in this manner—"For my part, if it be necessary, I do not refuse to dispute with you; for the result will be to show that it is your own obstinacy which prevents a re-

[1] *Loyauté.*

conciliation from taking place between us. Only bring cleanness of heart, and all controversy between us will be at an end. I would no longer contend with you, if you would bring me an upright heart."

Hence we obtain a declaration in the highest degree consolatory, that God does not contend with us as if he wished to pursue our offences to the utmost. For if we sincerely turn to him, he will immediately return to favour with us, and will blot out all remembrance of our sins, and will not demand an account of them. For he is not like men who, even for a slight and inconsiderable offence, often refuse to be reconciled. Nay, so far is he from giving us reason to complain of his excessive severity, that he is ready to cleanse us, and to make us *as white as snow.* He is satisfied with cleanness of heart, and if, notwithstanding of this cleanness of heart, there be any offence, he forgives it, and acquits those who have provoked him.

19. *If ye be willing and obedient.* Isaiah continues to plead the cause of God against the people, and states in a few words, that not only must the people bear the blame of all the calamities which they endured, but that it lies in their own power to regain immediately prosperity and happiness; because God is always ready to forgive them, provided that they do not harden their hearts. But because happiness appears here to be placed in the power of men, and at their disposal, the papists openly maintain that men, by the exercise of their own will, are free to choose either good or evil. When God charges men with obstinacy, we must not on that account believe that he describes the nature or extent of their ability.

But it would be useless to say, *if ye be willing,* unless it were in the power of men to *will.* I answer, though the choice be not so free as they pretend that it is, yet sinners are justly chargeable with being the voluntary agents of their calamities, because it is of their own accord, and not by compulsion, that they provoke God to anger. It is therefore true, that it is a special gift of God when a man aims at what is good; but it is equally true that it is their own wickedness that hinders the reprobate from applying

their mind to it, and, consequently, that the whole blame of their obstinacy rests with themselves. On this depends the reproach brought against the people, that they would have led a prosperous and happy life, if they had been submissive and obedient to God. For since God is by nature disposed to acts of kindness, nothing but our ingratitude and enmity hinders us from receiving that goodness which he freely offers to all. On the other hand, he adds a sharp and heavy threatening, that it is in his power to take vengeance; lest they should imagine that they who despise God will escape without punishment. It ought also to be observed, that the only rule of living well is to yield obedience to God and his word; for to *will* and to *hear* mean nothing else than to comply with the will of God.

A change of the construction of the words (*hypallage*) has been admitted into this sentence; for the meaning fully brought out would stand thus: "if your mind be ready, and your will be disposed, to obey;" or, which amounts to the same thing, "if you render obedience to me, and lend an ear to my word." Since, therefore, God places the happiness of men in obedience, it follows that our life is properly conducted, when we hear God speaking, and obey him in all things. How great, therefore, is the wickedness of men, when they refuse to listen to God who is continually speaking to them, and reject the happiness which he has provided and offered! It was proper that their wayward dispositions should be subdued, lest those wretched men should draw down on themselves the wrath of God, and willingly throw themselves, like wild beasts, on the edge of the sword. We must likewise observe, that he at length threatens them with final destruction, if they shall obstinately refuse to submit themselves to God.

Ye shall eat the good of the land. He means the fruits which the earth yields for supplying the necessaries of life; for in some sense the earth may be said to be unkind when it does not produce its fruits, and keeps them, as it were, in its bosom. Yet I have no doubt he alludes to the promises of the law, in which God declares, that to those who fear him he will bless the earth, and will cause it to produce

a great abundance of all good things. *The Lord shall make thee plenteous in the fruit of the ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.* (Deut. xxviii. 11.) And yet, when he offers to us the conveniences of the earthly life, it is not because he wishes that our attention should be confined to our present happiness, which alone hypocrites value, and which entirely occupies their minds; but in order that, by the contemplation of it, we may rise to the heavenly life, and that, by tasting so much goodness, he may prepare us for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. More especially was God accustomed to act in this manner towards the ancient people, that, by tasting present benefits, as by a shadow, they might be called to the heavenly inheritance. This distinction ought to be carefully observed, that we may apply this instruction to ourselves, according to the degree of prosperity to which God has exalted us. The Prophet intended to show that true happiness, with its accompaniments, consists in obedience to God; and that the wicked, by their obstinacy, bring upon themselves every kind of calamities, and therefore that all our distresses ought to be ascribed to the sins and crimes which we have committed.

20. *But if ye refuse and rebel.* The wicked always think that the severity of the punishment is greater than their guilt, even though the Lord chastise them very gently; and although they do not venture to justify themselves entirely, yet they never cease, as I formerly said, to accuse God of excessive severity. But the Prophet threatens that there will be no end of their calamities till they be destroyed; and lest they should imagine that they had nothing more to fear than those slight and inconsiderable punishments which they had hitherto suffered, he declares that far heavier judgments of God are still awaiting them.

The papists torture this passage to support the doctrine of free-will, and argue in the following manner:—"If men be happy whenever they are willing to obey God, it follows that this is placed in our own power." The argument certainly is very childish; for the Lord does not inform us by the Prophet what is the nature or extent of our capacity for good or evil; but he reminds us that it is our own fault if we do not

enjoy good things, and that the calamities with which we are afflicted are the punishments of our disobedience. The question, whether a man can make his bad will good, is altogether different from the question, whether, by the bad will, which is natural to him, he brings upon himself all the evils which he endures. Unjustly and falsely, therefore, do those skilful and ingenious doctors employ this passage to support their doctrine about a free choice of good and evil.

For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.[1] Since men who are blinded by their lusts are little moved by threatenings, the Prophet, in order to arouse them from deep slothfulness, reminds them that this declaration is not uttered by a mortal man, but has proceeded from *the mouth of God*, who is not changeable like men, but adheres constantly to his purpose.[2] He therefore mentions *the mouth of the Lord*, in order to terrify them, that they who in their vices have fallen into a deep slumber may give earnest attention to his threatenings.

21. *How is the faithful city become an harlot!* In order to make the rebuke more forcible, and the crime of the people more shocking, in having thus departed from God and from all uprightness, he cries aloud as if he had seen some monstrous thing; and certainly it was a change fitted to awaken horror, that a nation devoted to God, and chosen to *a royal priesthood*, (Ex. xix. 6,) had fallen from lofty piety to the lowest sink of wickedness. More especially he speaks of the *city* of Jerusalem, which was God's sanctuary and royal abode. He complains that the *city* which had formerly been a guardian of justice is a den of robbers; that she who formerly was a chaste and pure virgin hath *become a harlot.* To strike the deeper shame into the degenerate Jews, who had departed widely from their holy fathers, he assumes the air of a person astonished, and asks himself how this could possibly have happened.

The faithful city. By the word *faithful* he alludes, in my opinion, to the conjugal fidelity which a wife ought to pre-

[1] This paragraph, which our Author had inadvertently inserted in his exposition of the nineteenth verse, is here restored to its proper place.—*Ed.*

[2] "*For Jehovah hath spoken,* who fulfils his threatenings as well as his promises, and does not rashly recall what he hath spoken."—*Rosenmüller.*

serve to her husband. The signification is undoubtedly more extensive; but when I look at the connection of the passage, I do not hesitate to say that *faithful* means *chaste;* for immediately afterwards he employs another term in contrast with it, calling her *an harlot.* Whereas she once was a virtuous wife, *faithful* to the marriage-contract, she has now *become an harlot,* and her base conduct brings not a blush on her countenance. The Scriptures frequently call the Church the wife of God. (Hosea ii. 19, 20.) That honourable rank Jerusalem held, so long as she maintained spiritual chastity, and continued in the pure and lawful worship of God; but as soon as she departed from it she *became an harlot.*

This astonishment of the Prophet was undoubtedly joined with the deepest grief; for we ought to look upon it as something monstrous when men revolt from God, and refuse that allegiance which they have promised to render; nor is it possible that right-hearted men, when they behold such a revolt, can fail to be affected with the most poignant grief. We read that the angels in heaven rejoice at the conversion of one sinner; (Luke xv. 7, 10;) and therefore they cannot but mourn over the final ruin of any sinner. How much more then will they bewail the ruin and destruction of a whole state and Church!

Besides, that astonishment conveys also a complaint; as if the Prophet had said, "O Jerusalem, from what a flourishing condition hast thou fallen! Into what distress hast thou plunged thyself! What shame and disgrace hast thou brought upon thee!" When the flourishing state in which she had been, and the respect that had been paid to her in former times, are called to her remembrance, it ought to produce a still deeper impression on her mind; for she who was at one time the respected mother of a family is naturally more careful about her honour and reputation than one who has spent her whole life in base and licentious conduct.

It was full of judgment. He shows what fruits were produced by that allegiance to God at a former period. We may take *judgment* as but another name for uprightness; or, if it be thought preferable, we may call it *justice* when men render to every man his own, and *judgment* when the

cause of the innocent is defended, and the poor and needy are avenged; for such is the use of the words in Scripture when they are employed together; but as they are not perfectly connected in this passage, I consider *judgment* to denote uprightness; so that the same thing is twice expressed for the purpose of explaining it more fully.

But now murderers. He shows in what manner Jerusalem *became an harlot.* It was, that the city, which had formerly been distinguished for the love of justice and equity, was now full of *murders.* The meaning is, as we have formerly said, not that they were assassins or robbers, but that, by fraudulent and dishonest methods, under the pretence of justice, they had gained the property of others. In short, he means that they did not act fairly and justly towards their fellow-men, whatever might be the estimation in which they were held; for sometimes, and indeed very frequently, it happens that very wicked men are held in high esteem.

The condition to which Jerusalem was reduced should lead us to consider how often Satan exercises what may be called unbounded tyranny over the Church of God; for if ever there was a Church, there was one at that time in Jerusalem; and yet Isaiah affirms that it was a den of robbers, or a slaughter-house, where they cut men's throats. But if Satan could freely riot in that Church, let us not wonder that the same thing takes place among us; but let us labour not to suffer ourselves to be corrupted by such wicked examples.

22. *Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water.* Isaiah speaks metaphorically, and by two comparisons shows here, that though the outward appearance of affairs was not openly overturned, yet their condition was changed and corrupted, so as to be widely different from what it had formerly been: for he says that *dross* now shines instead of *gold,* and that the *wine,* though it retains its colour, has lost its flavour. "Though thou still make an empty show," saith the Prophet, "yet nothing pure will be found in thee: that *wine* which was wont to be *pure* in thee is corrupted; and though its colour deceive the eye, its taste shows that it has been *mixed.*"

All this means nothing more than that the Jews should lay aside hypocrisy, and should begin to confess their sins, and no longer flatter themselves after the manner of hypocrites. The comparisons here employed are exceedingly well adapted to this end, for *dross* bears some resemblance to *gold;* and in like manner, the colour of *wine mixed with water* resembles that of pure wine ; and yet both are very far from having that purity of which they make an outward show. In like manner hypocrites, by their hypocrisy, may be said to assume a false colour of *silver*, though they are of no more value than *dross*, and indeed are the more detestable on this account, that, though they are exceedingly wicked, yet, with not less treachery than baseness, they present to God and to men those hollow pretensions by which they cloak their malice.

23. *Thy princes are rebellious.* There is here an elegant allusion or play on words.[1] He does not speak of *princes* in such a manner as if the common people were holy and needed no reproof, but he points out the source of the evil; for as no disease is more injurious than that which spreads from the head into the whole body, so no evil is more destructive in a commonwealth than a wicked and depraved *prince*, who conveys his corruptions into the whole body both by his example and by the liberty which he allows. Hence, too, comes the proverb, ὁποῖα ἡ δέσποινα, τοῖαι καὶ αἱ θεραπαινίδες, *like mistress, like maids.* The meaning, therefore, is as if the Prophet had said that there was no one vice more than another that reigned among the people, but that an unbounded commission of crimes prevailed among the nobles themselves, and that in this manner the whole body was stained with pollution. Something which gives additional force to the statement is implied in the word *princes;* for it is deeply to be lamented when an evil arises from that very quarter in which the remedy for it ought to be expected. He next mentions a particular instance.

[1] Our author illustrates it by the alliteration of *primi pravi.* "The word סוררים (*sorerim*) is here equivalent," says Jarchi, "to סרים, (*sarim,*) that is, persons *departing* from the right path." "In this word סוררים, (*sorerim,*)" says his annotator Breithaupt, which our Commentator here explains by סרים, (*sarim,*) *departers*, "there is an allusion to the word שרים, (*princes,*) which we here find in the sacred text."—*Ed.*

Companions of thieves. By these words he means that they are so far from restraining theft and false dealing, that, on the contrary, they draw gain from them; and he justly calls those persons *companions of thieves*, who, by receiving part of the booty, grant permission to commit theft. And, indeed, when a judge is corrupted by a bribe, it is impossible but that crimes shall abound and pass unpunished, with the perpetrators of which we must consider him to be in collusion.

Every one loveth a gift. He next points out the reason why *princes* have made themselves *companions of thieves*, and have bound themselves by a wicked conspiracy to lend countenance to crimes. It is avarice. When judges are devoted to the love of money, justice is utterly destroyed; for if the acceptance of persons be a corruption of judgment, so that no room is left for justice, every man who is under the dominion of covetousness will assuredly regard the person rather than the cause. The consequence is, that he will not be able to perceive what is just and right, but, as one expresses it, will make laws and unmake them.

This reminds us how great a virtue it is in a magistrate to disregard money; for unless he keep his mind, his hands, and his eyes under restraint, he will never be able to judge justly. It is absurd to say, as some men do, that they keep their heart pure and uncorrupted, even though they receive bribes. What the Lord saith must be true, that *a gift blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.* (Ex. xxiii. 8.) No man is so upright, no man is so clear-sighted and sagacious, that his mind shall resist the enchantment, and his eyes the blinding influence, of gifts. Such judges, therefore, he justly declares to be *companions of thieves;* for, hurried along by a blind desire of money, they overturn all laws both of God and man, and leave no room for justice or modesty.

We must likewise observe that the Prophet, in order to convince hypocrites, brings forward their actions which were open and universally known; for otherwise they would not submit. And yet there can be no doubt that there were at that time many who objected, when he thus called them *thieves*, as even in the present day most men impudently

and obstinately exclaim that they are not *thieves* on account of receiving the rewards and gifts which are offered to them, because they do not prevent them from passing a just judgment. But these replies being frivolous, the Prophet, after having exposed their wicked actions, satisfies himself with the reproof which he has given, and argues with them no longer. And, indeed, nature declares that it is impossible to give just judgment, when judges are so eager for gain and reward; because they cannot but absolutely expose to sale their honesty and reputation.

They judge not the fatherless. As the Lord specially recommends to us the *fatherless* and *widows,* because they have been deprived of the protection of men, so we need not wonder if he is displeased when they are abandoned by the judges, who ought to have been their guardians and defenders; for since they have neither foresight, nor industry, nor strength, if no one comes forward to render assistance, they must be exposed without redress to every kind of violence and injustice. Now, when no regard is paid to them, it follows that the sway is held, not by justice, but by covetousness and plunder.

24. *Therefore saith the Lord, the* LORD *of hosts.* He first employs the word האדון, (*hāādōn,*) which literally signifies *Lord,* and expresses the relation to a servant. Next is added the word יהוה, (*Jehovah,*) which denotes the eternal essence and majesty of God. After having laid open some kinds of crimes, which made it manifest that in that nation everything was corrupted, Isaiah, now wishing to threaten and to hold out to them the judgment of God, not only represents God as invested with the power and authority of a judge, but at the same time reminds them that the children of Abraham are his peculiar people, and for this reason he immediately adds, *the mighty One of Israel.* There may also be implied in it a kind of irony, by which he stings the Jews, as if he had said that it was foolishness in them to boast of the name of God, seeing that they were worthless and unprincipled servants, and that it was vain for them to rely on his strength, which would immediately break forth against them. After this preface, he adds—

Ah! I will take consolation on my adversaries.[1] By these words he intimates that God will not be pacified until he has satiated himself with inflicting punishment. He employs the word *consolation* after the manner of men; for as anger is nothing else than the desire of revenge, so revenge gives relief to the mind, and he who has taken vengeance congratulates himself and is satisfied. By this course, which may be regarded as a kind of compensation, the Lord says that he will satisfy himself with inflicting punishment *on his adversaries.*

There are various ways, indeed, of expounding this passage; and I shall not undertake the task of examining all the interpretations and refuting those which I do not approve: it will be enough if we ascertain the true meaning. He does not here speak of Chaldeans or Assyrians, as some imagine, but of Jews, to whom, in the character of a herald, he proclaims war in the name of the Lord. This threatening sounded harshly in their ears; for they supposed that they were joined in such a confederacy with God, that he was an adversary to their adversaries. He declares, on the other hand, that he is their enemy, because he had so often been provoked by their crimes. In this manner we must shake off the slothfulness of hypocrites, who are continually waging war with God, and yet do not hesitate to allege that they enjoy his protection. We need not wonder, therefore, if the Prophet sternly pronounces them to be *adversaries* of God, who had broken the covenant, and had thus carried on war against him.

And yet, in order to show that he is unwillingly, as it were, constrained to inflict punishment on his people, God utters his threatening with a kind of groan. For as nothing is more agreeable to his nature than to do good, so whenever he is angry with us and treats us harshly, it is certain that our wickedness has compelled him to do so, because we do not allow his goodness to take its free course. More especially he is disposed to treat his own people with gentleness, and when he sees that there is no longer any room for his

[1] In our English version it runs, *Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries.—Ed.*

forbearance, he takes measures, as it were in sorrow, for inflicting punishment.

Some would rather choose perhaps to explain the particle הוי (*hoi*) as if God made this exclamation when aroused by anger. For my own part, I rather consider it, in this passage, to be an expression of grief; because God, being mindful of his covenant, would willingly spare his chosen people, were it not that pardon was entirely prevented by their obstinacy.

And avenge me of mine enemies. In this second clause there is a reduplication, (ἀναδίπλωσις,) a figure of speech customary with the Hebrews, who frequently express the same thing twice in one verse. Hence also we learn that the object of the statement is, that God cannot rest until he has taken vengeance on a wicked and treacherous people.

25. *And I will turn my hand upon thee.* This is an alleviation of the former threatening; for though he still proceeds with what he had begun to state about his severity, he at the same time declares that, amidst those calamities which were to be inflicted, the Church would be preserved. But the principal design was to comfort believers, that they might not suppose the Church to be utterly ruined, though God treated them more roughly than before. The Spirit of God, by the Prophets, continually warns the children of God, who always tremble at his word, not to be overwhelmed and lose heart on account of terrors and threatenings; for the more daringly that wicked men practise licentiousness and scoff at all threatenings, the more do those who are affected by a sincere fear of God tremble at them.

Besides, the *turning of the hands of God* denotes generally a token of his presence, as if he should say, *I will display my hand.* This he is wont to do in two ways, either by chastising the wicked, or by delivering believers from their distresses. Since, therefore, it is evident from the context that God purposes, by applying consolation, to mitigate the severity of punishment, the *turning of the hands* must here be viewed as referring to the restoration of the Church; for although he declared in general terms that all were his enemies, he now modifies or limits that statement by addressing Jerusalem or Zion by name.

When he adds, *I will purge away thy dross*, though he points out the fruit of correction, that believers may not be immoderately grieved or distressed on account of it, yet we learn from this expression that the purification of the Church is God's own work. For this purpose he always lifts up his hand to punish transgressions, that he may bring back wanderers into the road; but rods would be of no avail, if he did not make them useful by touching their hearts inwardly. And, indeed, since he points out here a special favour which he bestows on his elect, it follows from this that repentance is a true and peculiar work of the Holy Spirit; for otherwise the sinner, instead of profiting in the smallest degree, would be more and more hardened by chastisements.

The pure *purging*, so that no *dross* remains, must not, however, be understood as if God ever cleansed his Church entirely in this world from every stain, but must be regarded as spoken after the manner of men; as if he said that the condition of his Church will be such that her holiness will shine like pure silver. These words, therefore, indicate real purity, for the Jews had formerly been too well satisfied with their filthiness. This is a highly appropriate comparison, by which the Prophet declares, that though the Church was at that time polluted by many defilements, still some remnant would be left, which, after the removal of the pollution, would regain its brightness. In this manner he also connects both clauses; for when he formerly spoke of their crimes, he said that their *silver had become dross.* (Ver. 22.)

26. *And I will restore thy judges as at the first.* He now speaks without a figure; and having said that the source and origin of the evils was in the princes, he shows that a divine hand will purify that rank, when the Lord shall be pleased to restore the Church to perfect health. And, indeed, when they who rule are good and holy men, public order is maintained; for when wicked men have power, everything goes to ruin. By *judges and counsellors* are evidently meant any kind of magistrates; and when he promises that they will be such as they were *at the beginning*, he brings to their remembrance the extraordinary goodness of God, of which they had been deprived. God had graciously raised

up the throne of David, and in that government was pleased to give a bright resemblance of his own parental love. Though the authority of the family of David had degenerated into the grossest tyranny, yet they continued to boast of a false title; for they still vaunted of the reign of David in the same manner as the papists of the present day plume themselves on a false pretence of the Church. Justly, therefore, are the people reminded of the happiness from which they had fallen by their own fault, that they might not be displeased at a diminution of their numbers, by means of which they would again possess that order which God had established.

Then shalt thou be called. He describes the fruit of that reformation, of which he has spoken, as extending to the whole body; for, having said that Jerusalem, before she revolted from God, was *a faithful city, full of righteousness*, the Prophet now says, that when she shall have been chastised, the same virtues will be illustriously displayed in her. Here, too, is expressed the sum of true repentance; for by *righteousness* is meant uprightness, when every man obtains what belongs to him, and men live with each other without committing injury. The word *faithful* has a still more extensive meaning; for when a *city* is called *faithful*, it means not only that justice and honesty between man and man are observed, but that the purity of God's worship is maintained; and therefore the chastity and purity of the mind are included under that designation.

It must also be observed, however, that from this *faithfulness* springs justice; for when we adhere to truth in our mutual intercourse, justice easily gains the ascendency. And, indeed, when I closely examine the whole passage, I think that the Prophet now employs the word *faithfulness* in a more limited sense than formerly, and connects the two virtues as leading to the same object, so that, while truth goes first as the cause, justice is the effect of it. Isaiah promises not only that she will be *righteous* and *faithful*, but that she will also be distinguished by these commendations; by which he means that the knowledge or reputation of it will be everywhere diffused. We know that hypocrites,

too, are adorned with honourable titles ; but Isaiah, having introduced God as speaking, takes for granted that the city will actually be *righteous*, as it is foretold that she shall be. In the meantime, as I have said, he describes the fruit of a true conversion ; as if he had said, "When Jerusalem shall be brought back to true godliness, men will be persuaded that she is renewed."

27. *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment.* He confirms the same doctrine ; and because the restoration of the Church was hard to be believed, he shows that it does not depend on the will of men, but is founded on the *justice* and *judgment* of God ; as if he had said, that God will by no means permit his Church to be altogether destroyed, because he is *righteous*. The design of the Prophet, therefore, is to withdraw the minds of the godly from earthly thoughts, that in looking for the safety of the Church they may depend entirely on God, and not cease to entertain good hopes, although instead of aids they should see nothing but obstructions. It is a great mistake to consider *justice* and *judgment* to refer to the Church, as if Isaiah were speaking about the well-ordered condition of a city ; for the plain meaning is what I have stated, that though men yield no assistance, the justice of God is fully sufficient for redeeming his Church. And, indeed, so long as we look at ourselves, what hope are we entitled to cherish ? How many things, on the contrary, immediately present themselves that are fitted to weaken our faith ! It is only in the justice of God that we shall find solid and lasting ground of confidence.

And they that return of her.[1] This second clause points out the manner of their deliverance ; namely, that the exiles, who had been widely dispersed, will again be gathered together.

28. *And the destruction of the transgressors.* Lest hypocrites should imagine that any fruit of these promises belongs to them, and should indulge in vain boasting, he threatens that they shall perish, though God redeem his

[1] In the English version it is rendered, *her converts ;* but the marginal reading is, *And they that return of her.* "That is," says Jarchi, "those who are in her (in the city of Zion) that repent."—*Ed.*

Church. For hypocrites have always been mingled with the Church, and indeed are connected with it in the closest manner; but they form their estimation of it from outward show. All that God promises they at once apply confidently to themselves. The apostle tears from them this trust, if indeed it deserve the name of trust, which springs from pride and the arrogance of a haughty mind. Here we ought to observe how great wisdom is needed by godly teachers, that, while they terrify the wicked by the judgment of God, they may at the same time support good men, and strengthen them by some consolation, that they may not be cast down and discouraged. On the other hand, when believers are encouraged by the promise of God, and when wicked men falsely apply it to themselves, and puff up their minds with vain confidence, the method and course which we ought to pursue is, that we neither give occasion to wicked men to become proud, nor depress and discourage the minds of the godly; as Isaiah does in this passage. For while he speaks of the redemption of the Church, he at the same time threatens that sinners, that is, wicked men, shall be destroyed, that they may not suppose that these acts of God's kindness belong at all to them.

And yet, while he pronounces destruction against the wicked, by this comparison he exhibits more fully the favour of God towards believers, which is far more distinctly seen, when God allows the reprobate to perish, but preserves his own in safety, as it is said, *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.* Ps. xci. 7. Besides, he mitigates the grief and anguish which the diminution of the numbers of the Church might produce in godly minds; for he shows that there is no other way of imparting health to the whole body than by removing its corruption.

29. *For* (or, *that is*) *they shall be ashamed.* In the Hebrew the particle כִּי (*ki*) is employed, which properly denotes a cause, but frequently also denotes exposition. Now, since the Prophet does not here state anything new, but only explains the cause of the destruction which awaited the ungodly, to render כִּי (*ki*) by *that is,* appears to connect it better

with the preceding word, כלה, (*kālāh,*) *consumed, They shall be consumed, that is, they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired;* as if the Prophet had said that no evil will be more destructive to them than their own superstition. The idols, says he, which you call upon for your protection and safety will rather bring destruction upon you.

The word אלים, (ēlim,) *oaks,*[1] has been sometimes rendered *Gods;*[2] but this meaning is set aside by the context; for immediately afterwards he adds the word *groves: Ye shall be ashamed of the groves which you have chosen.* Now, under the image both of *trees* and of *groves,* the Prophet, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, reproves every kind of false worship; for although among the Jews there were many forms of idolatry, the custom here mentioned, of choosing *groves* and *forests* for offering sacrifices, was the most common of all. Whether the word גנות (*gannoth*) in the second clause be translated *groves* or *gardens,* there can be no doubt that it means the altars and sacred buildings in which they performed their idolatrous worship. Although they did not intend openly to revolt from God, they invented new kinds of worship; and, as if one place had been more acceptable to God than another, they devoted it to his service, as we see done by the papists. Next follows a change of the person; for, in order to make the reproof more severe, those wicked men of whom he spoke in the third person are now directly addressed, *Ye shall be ashamed.*

Which you have desired. By the word *desired* he reproves the mad and burning eagerness with which wicked men follow their superstitions. They ought to have been earnestly devoted with their whole heart to the service of one God, but they rush with blind violence to false worship, as if they were driven by brutish lust. In almost every human

[1] "The word אילים (*ēlim*) has, in the singular number, אלה, (*ēlāh,*) a kind of tree, called, in the German language, ulme."—*Jarchi.* For the purpose of proving that by אולמא, Jarchi means *the elm,* his annotator, Breithaupt, adduces not only the German ulme, but the Italian *olmo,* the French *orme,* and the Latin *ulmus.*—*Ed.*

[2] Evidently supposing that it is the plural of אל, (*ēl,*) God, and overlooking the medial radical *Yod,* which is sometimes expressed, but oftener left out, in this word.—*Ed.*

mind there naturally exists this disease, that they have forsaken the true God, and run mad in following idols; and hence Scripture frequently compares this madness to the loves of harlots, who shake off shame, as well as reason.

For the gardens that ye have chosen. That the Prophet describes not only their excessive zeal, but their presumption, in corrupting the worship of God, is evident from this second clause, in which he says that they *chose gardens;* for this term is contrasted with the injunction of the law. Whatever may be the plausible appearances under which unbelievers endeavour to cloak their superstitions, still this saying remains true, that *obedience is better than all sacrifices.* (1 Sam. xv. 22.) Accordingly, under the term *will-worship* (ἐθελοθρησκεία) Paul includes (Col. ii. 23) all kinds of false worship which men contrive for themselves without the command of God. On this account God complains that the Jews have despised his word, and have delighted themselves with their own inventions; as if he had said, "It was your duty to obey, but you wished to have an unfettered choice, or rather an unbounded liberty."

This single consideration is sufficient to condemn the inventions of men, that they have it not in their power to choose the manner of worshipping God, because to him alone belongs the right to command. God had at that time enjoined that sacrifices should not be offered to him anywhere else than at Jerusalem (Deut. xii. 13); the Jews thought that they pleased him in other places, and that false imagination deceived also the heathen nations. Would that it had gone no farther! But we see how the papists are involved in the same error, and, in short, experience shows that the disease has prevailed extensively in every age.

If it be objected that there was not so much importance in the place, that God ought to have regarded with such strong abhorrence the worship which was everywhere offered to him,—first, we ought to consider the reason why God chose that at that time there should be only one altar, which was, that it might be a bond of holy unity to an uncivilized nation, and that by means of it their religion might continue unchanged. Besides, granting that this spiritual

reason were but of temporary force, we must hold by the principle that commandments were given in the smallest matters, that the Jews might be better trained to obedience; for since superstition conceals itself under the pretence of devotion, it is hardly possible but that men will flatter themselves with their own inventions. But since obedience is the mother of true religion, it follows that when men exercise their own fancy, it becomes the source of all superstitions.

It must also be added, that as Isaiah formerly complained of those crimes which were contrary to brotherly love and to the second table of the law, so he now complains of their having transgressed the first table. For since the whole perfection of righteousness consists in keeping the law, when the Prophets wish to reprove men for their sins, they speak sometimes of the first, and sometimes of the second, table of the law. But we ought always to observe the figurative mode of expression, when under one class they include the whole.

30. *Ye shall certainly be*[1] *as an oak whose leaf fadeth.* The Hebrew particle כִּי (*ki*) may be taken in an affirmative sense, as I have translated it; and the Prophet appears to allude to those groves to which they had improperly restricted the worship of God; for, having mentioned *gardens*, he reproaches them with the confidence which they placed in them, and threatens drought. "You take pleasure," says he, "in your gardens and trees, but you shall be like withered trees that have lost their foliage." God therefore mocks the vain boasting of idolaters, who marvellously flatter themselves with their contrivances, and think that heaven is open to them, when they are employed in their ceremonies. Just as at the present day, when the papists have lighted their lamps and adorned their temples, when they dazzle with gold and precious stones, when they have played on their organs and rung their bells, they imagine that they are the happiest of all men, as if there were now no reason to dread that any evil should come to them from God, who had received from them a hundredfold satisfaction.

[1] *For ye shall be.*—Eng. Ver.

31. *And your God*[1] *shall be as tow.* The Hebrew word חסן (*chāsōn*) signifies *strong:* and though it is here applied to God, still it retains its signification, as if he had said, "That god who was your strength shall be turned into stubble."

And the maker of it. By *the maker* he means the carver; but as he mentions an idol, we must explain it agreeably to the matter in hand. Some think that he expresses the repentance of idolaters, by telling us that they would acknowledge their folly, and, being covered with shame, would burn their idols. But I consider the meaning to be different; for as a fire is made of dry fuel, such as tow, "in like manner," saith the Prophet, "gather you and your idols into one heap, as when a pile of wood is built up, that you may be consumed together, so that the idols may be *like tow,* and the men like fire, and that one conflagration may consume the whole."

And there shall be none to quench them. It ought to be observed that the Prophets, when they mention the wrath of God, describe it by outward representations, because it cannot be perceived by the eyes or by any other sense. Thus the wrath of God, by which the ungodly are destroyed, is compared to fire, which consumes all things. It is now evident enough what the Prophet means, namely, that all the ungodly shall be destroyed, whatever may be the nature of their confidence; and not only so, but that their destruction shall be the greater, because they have placed their confidence in false and deceitful things, and that utter destruction will overtake them from that very quarter from which they had vainly looked for deliverance. For the images and idols are excitements of the wrath of God, kindling it into a flame which cannot be quenched.

[1] *And the strong.*—Eng. Ver.

CHAPTER II.

1. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

7. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither *is there any* end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither *is there any* end of their chariots:

8. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

9. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

10. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

1. Verbum quod vidit Isaias, filius Amos super Iuda et Ierusalem.

2. Et accidet in novissimo dierum, ut statuatur mons domus Iehovæ in verticem montium, et erigatur supra omnes colles; et fluent ad eum omnes gentes.

3. Et venient populi multi, ac dicent, Venite, et ascendemus in montem Iehovæ, in domum Dei Iacob. Et instituet nos in viis suis, et ambulabimus in semitis ejus. Quoniam è Zion exibit lex, et verbum Domini è Ierusalem.

4. Et judicabit inter gentes, arguetque populos multos: et concident gladios suos in ligones, et lanceas suas in falces: nec levabit gens in gentem gladium, nec consuescent ultra prælio.

5. Domus Iacob, venite, et ambulabimus in lumine Domini.

6. Certè deseruisti populum tuum, domum Iacob: eo quòd impleti sint Oriente, (*vel, antiquitate,*) et auguribus, ut Philistæi: atque in filiis alienis acquieverint.

7. Impletur est terra ejus argento et auro; nec finis thesauris ejus. Equis quoque repleta est terra ejus, nec quadrigis ejus finis.

8. Impleta est etiam terra ejus idolis: et coram opere manuum suorum se incurvarunt, coram eo quod fixerunt digiti ipsorum.

9. Et inclinatus est homo, et humiliatus est vir: ideo, ne remittas, (*vel, non remittes.*)

10. Ingredere in petram, abscondere in pulvere à conspectu pavoris Domini, et gloria magnificentiæ ejus.

11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12. For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up, and he shall be brought low:

13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are* lifted up,

15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

19. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

21. To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

22. Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

11. Sublimitas oculorum hominis humiliabitur, et incurvabitur altitudo hominum, et exaltabitur Iehova solus in die illa.

12. Quoniam dies Iehovæ exercituum super omnem superbum et excelsum, et super omne elevatum, et humile erit.

13. Super omnes, inquam, cedros Libani sublimes et elevatos, super omnes quercus Basan,

14. Et super omnes montes excelsos, et super omnes colles elevatos,

15. Et super omnem turrim excelsam, et super omnem murum munitum,

16. Super omnes naves Tharsis, et super exquisitas picturas.

17. Et incurvabitur celsitudo hominis, et humiliabitur altitudo hominum, et exaltabitur Iehova solus in die illa.

18. Idola autem in universum abolebit.

19. Et ingredientur in cavernas petrarum, et in voragines terræ, a præsentia terroris Iehovæ et gloria majestatis ejus: cum surrexerit ut concutiat terram.

20. In die illa projiciet homo idola sua argentea, et idola sua aurea, quæ fecerunt ei ad adorandum, in cavernam talparum et vespertilionum;

21. Et ingredientur in scissuras petrarum, et cacumina saxorum, a facie pavoris Iehovæ et gloria majestatis ejus, cum surrexerit ut concutiat terram.

22. Cessate igitur ab homine cujus in nare spiritus; qua enim in re (*vel, ad quid, vel, quanti*) ipse reputatur?

1. *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.* This prophecy is a confirmation of that doctrine which we had a little before, concerning the restoration of the Church. For

since it is difficult to cherish the hope of safety, when we are, as it were, in the midst of destruction, while the wrath of God burns and consumes everything far and wide, or while his threatenings strike terror into our minds, at such a period the bare promises are hardly sufficient to support us and to allay our fears. For this reason the Lord determined that to the consolation which had already been proclaimed there should be added this special vision, by way of confirmation, in order to make it more certain and undoubted that, whatever calamities might arise, his Church would never perish. I have no doubt, therefore, but that this vision agrees with what is stated in the 26th and 27th verses of the former chapter.

Hence we learn what was the advantage and design of *visions;* for since doctrine sometimes has not sufficient weight with us, God therefore adds *visions,* that by means of them he may seal his doctrine to us. Since, therefore, this vision is connected with the former promise, we learn from it this useful doctrine, that all visions of every kind which God formerly gave to his Prophets must be joined to the promises in such a manner as to be seals of them. And thus we perceive more and more the astonishing goodness of God, that, not satisfied with giving us his bare word, he places before our eyes, as it were, representations of the events.

He has added a confirmation, that the restoration of the Church is a matter of very great importance, and necessary to be known. For where is the truth of the Lord, where is faith, if there be no Church? If there be none, it follows that God is a liar, and that everything contained in his word is false. But as God frequently shows, by striking proofs, that he preserves the Church by unknown methods and without the assistance of men, so he now declares by a remarkable prediction that he will do this.

There were two purposes to be served by this prediction. First, since Isaiah, and others who came after him, were unceasingly to proclaim terror, on account of the obstinate wickedness of the people, until the temple should be burnt, and the city destroyed, and the Jews carried into captivity,

it was necessary that such severity should be mitigated towards believers by some consolation of hope. Secondly, as they were to languish in captivity, and as their minds were shaken, even after their return, by a succession of varied calamities, and at length were almost overwhelmed with despair by the dreadful desolation and confusion, they might a hundred times have fainted, if they had not been upheld. As to those who had already fallen, they were raised up and confirmed by the promised restoration, to such an extent, at least, that they retained among them the practice of calling on God, which is the only and undoubted remedy for the worst of evils. הדבר, (*haddābār,*) *the word,* is rendered by some interpreters *the thing,* which accords with the general signification of this term; but it is better to view it as denoting a divine purpose. Isaiah says that it was revealed to him by a special vision.

2. *And it shall come to pass in the last of the days.*[1] When he mentions the end or completion of days, let us remember that he is speaking of the kingdom of Christ; and we ought also to understand why he gives to the kingdom of Christ this appellation. It was because till that time everything might be said to be in a state of suspense, that the people might not fix their eyes on the present condition of things, which was only a shadow, but on the Redeemer, by whom the reality would be declared. Since Christ came, therefore, if that time be compared with ours, we have actually arrived at *the end of ages.* It was the duty of the fathers who lived at that time to go, as it were, with outstretched arms to Christ; and since the restoration of all things depended on his coming, it is with good reason that they are enjoined to extend their hope to that period. It was indeed always useful for them to know, that under Christ the condition of the Church would be more perfect; more especially because they were held under figures, for the Lord was pleased to arouse them in various ways, for the express purpose of keeping them in suspense.

But there was a peculiar importance attached to this prediction; for, during four hundred years or thereby, there

[1] *In the last days.*—Eng. Ver.

were innumerable occasions on which they might have fainted, had they not called to remembrance that fulness of days, in which the Church was to be perfectly restored. During the various storms, therefore, by which the Church was nearly overwhelmed, every believer, when shipwrecked, seized on this word as a plank, that by means of it he might be floated into the harbour. Yet it ought to be observed, that while the fulness of days began at the coming of Christ, it flows on in uninterrupted progress until he appear the second time for our salvation. (Heb. ix. 28.)

That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established. This vision might be thought to wear the aspect of absurdity, not only because Zion was a little hill of no extraordinary height, just as if one should compare a handful of earth to huge mountains; but because he had but a little before predicted its destruction. How, then, could it be believed that Mount Zion, after having lost all her greatness, would again shine with such lustre as to draw upon her the eyes *of all the nations?* And yet she is extolled as if she had been loftier than Olympus. "Let the Gentiles," says Isaiah, "boast as much as they please of their lofty mountains; for they shall be nothing in comparison of that hill, though it be low and inconsiderable." According to nature, this certainly was very improbable. What! shall Zion be hung up in the clouds? And therefore there can be no doubt that wicked men scoffed at this prediction; for ungodliness has always been ready to break forth against God.

Now the peculiarity which I have noticed tended to weaken the belief of this prediction; for when Zion, after the destruction of the temple, had fallen into the deepest disgrace, how could she rise again so suddenly? And yet it was not in vain that Isaiah prophesied; for at length this hill was actually raised above all the mountains, because from it was heard the voice of God, and sounded through the whole world, that it might lift us up to heaven; because from it the heavenly majesty of God shone brightly; and lastly, because, being the sanctuary of God, it surpassed the whole world in lofty excellence.

The use of this prophecy deserves our attention. It was,

that Isaiah intended to bring consolation, which would support the minds of the people during the captivity; so that, although there should be no temple, and no sacrifices, and though all should be in ruins, still this hope would be cherished in the minds of the godly, and, amidst a condition so desolate and so shockingly ruinous, they would still reason thus: "The mountain of the Lord is indeed forsaken, but there he will yet have his habitation; and greater shall be the glory of this mountain than of all others." To prevent them, therefore, from doubting that such would be the result, the Prophet has here, as it were, sketched a picture in which they might behold the glory of God; for although the mountain was still in existence, yet a disgraceful solitude made it almost an object of detestation, since it had lost its splendour in consequence of having been forsaken by God. But it was the duty of the pious to look not at those ruins, but at this vision. Moreover, the reason why he speaks in such lofty terms concerning the exaltation of Mount Zion is sufficiently evident from what follows; because thence proceeded the Gospel, in which the image of God shines. Other mountains might excel it in height; but as the glory of God has surpassing excellence, so the mountain in which he is manifested must also be highly distinguished. It was not, therefore, on her own account that he extolled Mount Zion, but in respect of her ornament, the splendour of which would be communicated to the whole world.

3. *And many people shall go.* In the former verse he had slightly noticed the reason why Mount Zion would hold so high a rank. It was because all nations would flow to it, as if the rivers were overflowing through the great abundance of waters. He now makes the same statement, and assigns the reason; for it might be asked why various nations flocked to it in crowds from distant lands. He says, therefore, that the desire of serving God was their motive.

The word רבים, (*rabbim,*) *many,* implies a contrast; for it means that there will not be, as formerly, but one nation which devotes itself to the worship of the true God, but that those who formerly were *strangers and foreigners* (Eph. ii. 19) will come into the same agreement with them about religion;

as if he had said that the Church, which had formerly been, as it were, shut up in a corner, would now be collected from every quarter. By the word *many* he meant *various;* for unquestionably he did not intend to weaken the force of what he had said a little before about *all nations.* Now, though this was never fulfilled, that the nations of the whole world, each of them leaving their native country, made a journey into Judea; yet, because the doctrine of the gospel, by which God hath gathered to himself a Church indiscriminately out of all nations, proceeded from Mount Zion, he justly says that they will come to it who having, with one consent of faith, embraced the covenant of eternal salvation, have been united into one Church. We must also observe the harmony between the figures of the law and that spiritual worship which began to be introduced at the coming of Christ.

And shall say, Come. By these words he first declares that the godly will be filled with such an ardent desire to spread the doctrines of religion, that every one not satisfied with his own calling and his personal knowledge will desire to draw others along with him. And indeed nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature of faith than that deadness which would lead a man to disregard his brethren, and to keep the light of knowledge choked up within his own breast. The greater the eminence above others which any man has received from his calling, so much the more diligently ought he to labour to enlighten others.

This points out to us also the ordinary method of collecting a Church, which is, by the outward voice of men; for though God might bring each person to himself by a secret influence, yet he employs the agency of men, that he may awaken in them an anxiety about the salvation of each other. By this method he likewise strengthens their mutual attachment, and puts to the test their willingness to receive instruction, when every one permits himself to be taught by others.

Next Isaiah shows that those who take upon them the office of teaching and exhorting should not sit down and command others, but should join and walk along with them as companions; as we see that some men are very severe in-

structors, and eager to urge others forward, who yet do not move a step. But here believers, instead of addressing to their brethren the command, *Go up,* rather lead the way by their own example. This is the true method, therefore, of profitable teaching, when, by actually performing what we demand, we make it evident that we speak with sincerity and earnestness.

And he will teach us in his ways.[1] He shows, first, that God cannot be worshipped aright until we have been enlightened by doctrine; and, secondly, that God is the only teacher of the Church, on whose lips we ought to hang. Hence it follows that nothing is less acceptable to God than certain foolish and erring services which men call devotion; and likewise, that though he employs the agency of men in teaching, still he reserves this as his own right, that they must utter nothing but his word. Had this rule been followed by those who called themselves teachers of the Church, religion would not have been so shamefully corrupted by a wide and confused diversity of superstitions. Nor is it possible that we shall not be carried away into various errors, where we are tossed about by the opinions of men. Justly, therefore, does Isaiah, when he claims for God alone the power and authority to teach the Church, shut the mouths of all mortals; so that the office of teaching is committed to pastors for no other purpose than that God alone may be heard there. Let those who wish to be reckoned ministers of Christ allow themselves to be regulated by this statement, that they may take nothing away from his authority.

The Hebrew words ויורנו מדרכיו (*vĕyorēnū midderāchāiv*) may be literally rendered, *he will teach us* OF *his ways;* which means, "He will show us what his ways are," or, he will set before us his ways for a perfect instruction.

Next he adds obedience, *we will walk in his paths;* by which he points out both the object and the result; for the instruction which is delivered to us from the mouth of the Lord is not mere speculation, but directs the course of our life, and leads us to obey him. But we ought also to observe, that the commandments of God are called *ways* and

[1] *And he will teach us his ways.*—Eng. Ver.

paths, in order to inform us that they go miserably astray who turn aside from them in the smallest degree. Thus every kind of unlawful liberty is restrained, and all men, from the least even to the greatest, are enjoined to observe this rule of obedience, that they keep themselves within the limits of the word of God.

For out of Zion shall go forth the law. This is an explanation of the former verse, in which he said that Mount Zion will be placed above all mountains; that is, that she will be raised to the highest pitch of honour, when she shall become the fountain of saving doctrine, which shall flow out over the whole world. He calls it *the law;* but we have elsewhere spoken of the derivation and meaning of this word; for תורה (*tōrāh*) means *instruction,* and the most complete of all kinds of instruction is contained in *the law.* He speaks, therefore, after the manner of the prophets; for since the rule of godliness was to be obtained from *the law,* they were wont, by a figure of speech, (synecdoche,) in which a part is taken for the whole, to include under the word *law* all the instruction which God has given; just as under the word *altar* they include the whole worship of God.

Now, since we know that this prediction was fulfilled, when the preaching of the gospel began at that very place, (for Christ first taught at Jerusalem, and afterwards his doctrine was spread throughout the whole world,) we must not take the word *law* in a limited sense; for at that time, as to its figures and bondage, it was rather abolished. (Luke ii. 46; Mark xvi. 15; Ezek. xlvii. 1; Luke xxiv. 47.) Hence we conclude that the term is applied, without limitation, to the word of God. And when the prophets say that waters will spring out of the temple to water the whole world, (Ezek. xlvii. 1,) they express metaphorically what Isaiah lays down in plain language; namely, that the source of saving doctrine will be from that place; for out of it the apostles and other teachers spread the gospel through the whole world.

We must observe the reason why the Prophet made these statements. It was, that he might fortify the godly against various changes, which otherwise, on manifold occasions, might have crushed their minds; and therefore it was of

great importance to provide against offences, and to fortify the minds of the godly. "Whatever may be the condition of your affairs, and though you should be oppressed by afflictions on all sides, still continue to cherish this assured hope, that *the law will go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;* for this is an infallible decree of God, which no diversity or change of events will make void."

How much the godly needed this consolation may be easily inferred from the course of events which immediately followed; for when Judea had been forsaken, the temple destroyed, the worship of God overturned, and the comely order of the Church utterly defaced, while tyranny became more and more oppressive, it was natural that their minds should be discouraged, and that all hope should be thrown away. On the other hand, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, when dreadful superstitions gradually obtained prevalence, and the priests, instead of discharging their office in a lawful manner, grasped at wicked tyranny, what else could have occurred to the minds of the godly than that religion had fallen into neglect, and that the worship of God was entirely laid aside, if they had not been supported by this promise? For there can be no doubt that this temptation, which arose out of internal vices, was more injurious than their banishment into Babylon. So long as they were exiles, they had at least prophets, by whose instruction they were encouraged; but in that state of corruption the good effect of instruction had been lost, and no regard was paid to religion or godliness. But by the aid of this prediction alone the Lord granted to them the support which they needed. For why had *the law*, which God appeared to have consecrated for himself in his own habitation, been thrown down and basely trampled under foot? Who, then, would have thought not only that it would have a place there, but that it would also reign in all foreign places, and in the most distant regions? On the other hand, the Prophet declares not only that *the law* will remain in its place, but that it will travel further; by which he means that it will not be confined within its former boundaries, for it will be proclaimed to the Gentiles without distinction.

And undoubtedly this had very great authority and weight with the Apostles, when they knew that they were appointed to perform those things which are here promised. Otherwise they would never have had courage enough to venture to undertake the office, and, in short, would not have been able to endure the burden, especially when the whole world furiously opposed them. But they knew that he by whom this had been promised, and from whom they had received authority to deliver this message, would easily remove every obstacle. It ought also to be observed that we obtain from it a strong confirmation of our faith, when we learn that the doctrine of the gospel *came forth out of Zion;* because we thence conclude that it is not new, or lately sprung up, but that it is the eternal truth of God, of which a testimony had been given in all ages before it was brought to light.

We also infer that it was necessary that all the ancient ceremonies should be abolished, and that a new form of teaching should be introduced, though the substance of the doctrine continue to be the same; for *the law* formerly proceeded out of Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. 20,) but now it proceeded *out of Zion*, and therefore it assumed a new form. Two things, therefore, must be observed; first, that the doctrine of God is the same, and always agrees with itself; that no one may charge God with changeableness, as if he were inconsistent; and though the law of the Lord be now the same that it ever was, yet it came *out of Zion* with a new garment; secondly, when ceremonies and shadows had been abolished, Christ was revealed, in whom the reality of them is perceived.

4. *And he shall judge among the nations.* He means that the doctrine will be like a king's sceptre, that God may rule among all nations; for, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, the Hebrew word שָׁפַט, (*shāphat,*) *to judge,* means *to govern* or *to reign.* Since, therefore, God had not taken more than one nation to be subject to his reign, the Prophet here shows that the boundaries of his kingdom will be enlarged, that he may rule over various nations. He likewise notices indirectly the difference between the kingdom of David, which was but a shadow, and

this other kingdom, which would be far more excellent. At that time God ruled over his chosen people by the hand of David, but after the coming of Christ he began to reign by himself, that is, in the person of his only-begotten Son, who was truly *God manifested in the flesh.* (1 Tim. iii. 16.) The prophets sometimes employ the name of *David* when they are speaking about the kingdom of Christ, and they do so with propriety, that is, with respect to his human nature; for the Redeemer had been promised to spring from that family. (Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24.) But here the Prophet extols his divine majesty, from which it is evident how much more excellent is the condition of the new Church than that of the ancient Church, since God hath revealed himself as King in his Son. And again he confirms the calling of the Gentiles, because Christ is not sent to the Jews only, that he may reign over them, but that he may hold his sway over the whole world.

And shall rebuke many nations. The word יכח (*yakach*) sometimes means *to expostulate,* sometimes *to correct,* and likewise *to prepare;* but the ordinary interpretation is most suitable to this passage, in which the Prophet speaks of the reformation of the Church. For we need correction, that we may learn to submit ourselves to God; because, in consequence of the obstinacy which belongs to our nature, we shall never make progress in the word of God, till we have been subdued by violence. Accordingly, Christ makes the beginning of preaching the gospel to be, *that the world be reproved concerning sin.* (John xvi. 8.) That the doctrine may not be without profit, Isaiah shows that the stubbornness of our flesh must be subdued; and therefore he attributes to God the office of a *reproving judge,* that he may try our life, and, by condemning our vices, may effect a reformation of our morals. And, indeed, we see how little effect is produced by the gospel, unless where that power of the Spirit is exercised which leads men to repentance.

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares. He next mentions the beneficial result which will follow, when Christ shall have brought the Gentiles and the nations under his dominion. Nothing is more desirable than peace;

but while all imagine that they desire it, every one disturbs it by the madness of his lusts; for pride, and covetousness, and ambition, lead men to rise up in cruelty against each other. Since, therefore, men are naturally led away by their evil passions to disturb society, Isaiah here promises the correction of this evil; for, as the gospel is the *doctrine of reconciliation*, (2 Cor. v. 18,) which removes the enmity between us and God, so it brings men into peace and harmony with each other. The meaning amounts to this, that Christ's people will be meek, and, laying aside fierceness, will be devoted to the pursuit of peace.

This has been improperly limited by some commentators to the time when Christ was born; because at that time, after the battle of Actium, the temple of Janus[1] was closed, as appears from the histories. I readily admit that the universal peace which existed throughout the Roman empire, at the birth of Christ, was a token of that eternal peace which we enjoy in Christ. But the Prophet's meaning was different. He meant that Christ makes such a reconciliation between God and men, that a comfortable

[1] The temple of Janus was built by Numa Pompilius, whose wise and peaceful administration contrasts strongly with the bloody and ferocious wars by which many of the succeeding emperors endeavoured to make themselves illustrious. It was expressly intended by its founder that this temple should repress the natural fierceness of the people by discouraging warlike operations. For this purpose the opening or shutting of its doors was made to indicate whether the Roman empire was in a condition of *war* or *peace* with the surrounding states. When war raged on all sides, all its doors stood open by night and by day; and the shutting of any one of them declared, that in that direction towards which it looked peace had been restored. Livy tells us, that so remarkable an event as the entire shutting up of this temple, which proclaimed that universal peace existed throughout the empire, had occurred but thrice during the long period of seven hundred years; once under the reign of Numa, next, during the consulship of Titus Manlius, and lastly, after the battle of Actium, in which the Emperor Augustus gained a splendid naval victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. (Liv. i. 19.) Historians have fixed the date of the latter event with extraordinary precision; and, while their only object was to pronounce a lofty panegyric on Augustus as the peculiar favourite of heaven, they have unintentionally recorded that the temple of Janus was shut up when *the Prince of Peace* (Is. ix. 6) was ushered into the world. So striking a coincidence could not fail to attract observation, as belonging to *the fulness of the time* (Gal. iv. 4) at which the Messiah appeared, and as one of the beautiful arrangements of him who is *wonderful in counsel and excellent in working*. (Is. xxviii. 29.) Rarely has chronology proved to be so delightful and instructive.—*Ed.*

state of peace exists among themselves, by putting an end to destructive wars. For if Christ be taken away, not only are we estranged from God, but we incessantly carry on open war with him, which is justly thrown back on our own heads; and the consequence is, that everything in the world is in disorder.

Besides, Isaiah promises that, when the gospel shall be published, it will be an excellent remedy for putting an end to quarrels; and not only so, but that, when resentments have been laid aside, men will be disposed to assist each other. For he does not merely say, *swords shall be broken in pieces*, but *they shall be turned into mattocks;* by which he shows that there will be so great a change that, instead of annoying one another, and committing various acts of injustice, as they had formerly done, they will henceforth cultivate peace and friendship, and will employ their exertions for the common advantage of all; for *mattocks* and *pruning-hooks* are instruments adapted to agriculture, and are profitable and necessary for the life of man. He therefore shows that, when Christ shall reign, those who formerly were hurried along by the love of doing mischief, will afterwards contend with each other, in every possible way, by acts of kindness.

Neither shall they practise war any more.[1] The word למד (*lāmad*) signifies either *to be accustomed to*, or *to learn*. But the meaning of the Prophet is plain enough, that they will not train themselves in destructive arts, and will not strive with each other in acts of cruelty and injustice, as they were formerly accustomed to do. Hence we infer that they have made little proficiency in the gospel, whose hearts have not been formed to meekness, and among whom there does not yet reign that brotherly love which leads men to perform kind offices to each other. But this cannot be done before the consciences have been brought into a state of peace with God; for we must begin there, in order that we may also be at peace with men.

Some madmen torture this passage to promote anarchy, (*ἀναρχίαν,*) as if it took away from the Church entirely the

[1] *Neither shall they learn war any more.*—Eng. Ver.

right to use the sword, and bring it forward for condemning with great severity every kind of wars. For example, if a prince defend the people entrusted to him, and protect them against injustice, those people say, "It is unlawful for Christians to use the sword." But it is easy to reply to this; for the Prophet speaks metaphorically about the kingdom of Christ, which leads men, through mutual kindness, to become reconciled to each other. The Scriptures frequently employ a metaphor, in which the thing signified is denoted by a sign; as in that passage, *He who hath not a sword, let him buy one.* (Luke xxii. 36.) Christ certainly did not intend to induce his followers to fight, but intimated that the time of war was at hand. On the other hand, we are told that swords shall cease to exist, or shall be beaten down to serve a different purpose, when hatred and fighting shall be at an end, and when they who formerly were at enmity shall be reconciled to each other.

It may be objected that, in a state of harmony and peace, the sword will no longer be needed. I reply, that peace exists among us just as far as the kingly power of Christ is acknowledged, and that these two things have a mutual relation. Would that Christ reigned entirely in us! for then would peace also have its perfect influence. But since we are still widely distant from the perfection of that peaceful reign, we must always think of making progress; and it is excessive folly not to consider that the kingdom of Christ here is only beginning. Besides, God did not gather a Church —by which is meant an assembly of godly men—so as to be separate from others; but the good are always mixed with the bad; and not only so, but the good have not yet reached the goal, and are widely distant from that perfection which is required from them. The fulfilment of this prophecy, therefore, in its full extent, must not be looked for on earth. It is enough, if we experience the beginning, and if, being reconciled to God through Christ, we cultivate mutual friendship, and abstain from doing harm to any one.

5. *O house of Jacob.* He sharply rebukes the Jews by holding out the example of the Gentiles; for since, in consequence of the spread of his kingdom, God would give law

to all nations from Mount Zion, so as to ingraft them into the body of his chosen people, nothing could be more strange than that *the house of Jacob* should revolt from him, and that, when strangers were drawing near, the members of the household, who ought to have been foremost, should withdraw. This is, therefore, not only an exceedingly vehement exhortation, but also a heavy and sharp complaint. Accordingly, he addresses them by an honourable name, saying, *O house of Jacob, come;* that he may express more strongly their ingratitude, which appeared in this, that though they were in the Church God's first-born, they utterly renounced that right of inheritance which they held in common with others.

There is, therefore, an implied comparison, as if he had said, "Lo, the Gentiles flow together to Mount Zion, and every one exhorts and urges on his neighbour; they submit to receive instruction from God, and to be reproved by him; and why do you, O Israelites, you who are the inheritance of God, why do you draw back? Shall the Gentiles submit to God, and shall you refuse to acknowledge his authority? Has so great a light been kindled in every part of the world, and shall you not be enlightened by it? Shall so many waters flow, and will you not drink? What madness is this, that when the Gentiles run so eagerly, you sit still in idleness?"

And we will walk in the light of the Lord. When he adds *we will walk*, he means that *the light* is placed before their feet, but that they disregard it by shutting their eyes, and even extinguish it as far as lies in their power; and yet its brightness draws to it distant nations.

6. *Surely thou hast forsaken thy people.* In these words he now plainly charges the people with having a perverse disposition; and he does this not in direct terms, but, as it were, bursting into astonishment, he suddenly breaks off his discourse, and, turning to God, exclaims, "Why should I waste words on a nation grown desperate, which thou, O Lord, hast justly rejected, because, giving itself up to idolatrous practices, it has treacherously departed from thy word?"

It may also be a prediction of punishment still future, which he foresaw by the Spirit; as if he had said, That it

was not wonderful if ruin and desolation were about to overtake Mount Zion on account of the great crimes of the nation. His design may have been, that so mournful a spectacle might not be the occasion of despair, and that those who were capable of being cured might be moved by repentance, and turn to God ere this calamity arrived. For while the prophets are heralds of God's judgments, and threaten vengeance against the ungodly, they usually endeavour, at the same time, to bring as many as they can to some kind of repentance. The servants of God ought never to lay aside this disposition, which would lead them to endeavour to do good even to the reprobate, if that were possible. (2 Tim. ii. 25.)

This passage ought to yield abundant consolation to godly teachers; for when we think that we are speaking to the deaf, we become faint, and are tempted to give up all exertion, and to say, "What am I about? I am beating the air." Yet the Prophet does not cease to exhort those in whom he perceived no ground of comfortable hope; and while he stands like one astonished at this destruction of the people, he nevertheless addresses those whom he sees going to ruin. At the same time we must observe that, however obstinate the ungodly may be, we must pronounce vengeance against them; and though they refuse and gnaw the bridle, yet, that they may be left without excuse, we must always summon them to the judgment-seat of God.

I consider the word כִּי (*ki*) to mean *surely;*[1] for this signification is more suitable, because he breaks off the exhortation which he had begun, and addresses God. And when he again calls them *the house of Jacob,* this is added for the purpose of imparting greater vehemence, as is usually done in a moving discourse; as if he had said, "This holy nation, which God had chosen, is now forsaken."

Because they are replenished from the East. As the Hebrew word קֶדֶם (*kedem*) sometimes denotes *the east,* and sometimes *antiquity,* it may be interpreted to mean that they were *filled with ancient* manners; because they had again brought into use those superstitions by which the

[1] In the English Version it is rendered *therefore.—Ed.*

land of Canaan was formerly infected. For we know that the prophets often reproach the nation of Israel with resembling the Canaanites more than they resembled Abraham and the rest of the holy fathers. And, indeed, because they had been brought into the possession of this land, when the ancient inhabitants had been driven out, in order that it might be cleansed from its pollution, and afterwards devoted to holiness, the refusal to change their wicked customs involved a twofold ingratitude. But as the other meaning—*from the East*—has been more generally adopted, I have chosen to retain it; though even in this view the commentators differ, for some consider the letter מ (*mem*) to denote comparison, and מִקֶּדֶם (*mikkedem*) to denote *more than the inhabitants of the East*, while others adopt the simpler, and, as I think, the more correct view, that they were *filled with the east*, that is, with the vices which they had contracted from that quarter; for wicked imitation is amazingly contagious, and nothing is more natural than that corruptions should glide from one place into another more distant.

And with divinations, like the Philistines. This clause explains the former more fully; for under *divinations* he includes, by synecdoche, the impostures of Satan to which heathen nations were addicted. The Prophet therefore means that they now differ in no respect from *the Philistines*, though God had separated them from that people by the privilege of his adoption; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the severest condemnation, that they had forgotten their calling, and polluted themselves with the corrupted and ungodly customs of the Gentiles. Hence it appears that to sin by the example of another contributes nothing to alleviate the guilt.

And have delighted in the children of strangers. The last part of the verse is interpreted in various ways; because the phrase, *the children of strangers*, is viewed by some metaphorically, as denoting laws and customs; while others regard them as referring to marriages; because, by marrying indiscriminately women of foreign extraction, they had mingled their seed, so that there were many illegitimate children. Jerome gives a harsher exposition, that they polluted them-

selves by wicked lusts contrary to nature. For my own part, I have no doubt that by *the children of strangers* are meant foreign nations, and not figuratively the laws themselves. The crime charged against them by the Prophet therefore is, that, by endeavouring to please the Gentiles, they entangled themselves in their vices, and thus preferred not only mortal men, but wicked men, to God. He says that they *delighted*, because the desire or delight of wicked imitation effaced from their hearts the love of God and of sound doctrine.

7. *Their land is filled with silver and gold.* We must attend to the order which the Prophet here observes; for he now enumerates the reasons why the Lord rejected his people. In the former verse he began with *divinations* and the customs of *strangers;* he now comes down to *silver and gold;* and afterwards he will speak of *horses and chariots.* There can be no doubt that, having first condemned idolatry, he reproves them, secondly, for covetousness, and, thirdly, for sinful trust, when men depart from God, and contrive for themselves vain grounds of confidence. It was not a thing in itself to be condemned, that this nation had abundance of gold and silver; but because they burned with insatiable covetousness, and trusted to *horses and chariots,* he justly reproves them.

The Hebrew particle ו (*vau*) is here viewed by some as denoting a contrast, supposing the meaning to be, AND YET *their land is filled with silver and gold.* This would show the ingratitude of the people to be the greater, because, though they enjoyed an abundance of all good things, they betook themselves, as if their case had been desperate, to magical arts and to idols, which is much less excusable than if they had fled to them during their adversity; because, though they were fed to the full with an abundance of good things, yet they shook off the yoke of God. In this way he would aggravate the criminality of a nation that fled to idols freely and of their own accord, even though they were luxuriating in their abundance. But I do not receive this interpretation, for I think it too far-fetched. On the contrary, he includes in one continued enumeration the vices with

which that nation was chargeable, *covetousness, sinful confidence, and idolatry.* Accordingly, though the opinion of those who explain it as a contrast be a true opinion, it does not harmonize with this passage.

And there is no end of their treasures. Isaiah proceeds to illustrate more clearly and forcibly what he has formerly said; for, though it be not in itself sinful or blamable that a person should possess gold or silver, provided that he make a proper use of it, he properly launches out against that wicked desire and mad eagerness to accumulate money, which is most detestable. He says that *there is no end,* because their eagerness is insatiable, and goes beyond the bounds of nature. The same opinion must be formed about *horses and chariots,* for false confidence is here reproved. To prevent this evil, the Lord had forbidden kings to gather together a great multitude of horses or chariots, lest, trusting to them, they should *cause the people to return to Egypt.* (Deut. xvii. 16.) Since, therefore, it is difficult for men to have resources of this kind in abundance without being also lifted up with pride, it was the will of God that his people should not have them at all, or at least should be satisfied with a moderate share.

8. *Their land is also full of idols.* He repeats what he had already noticed about idolatry, but enters into it more fully; and, having first mentioned the subject itself, he next speaks of the use of it, which almost always follows. It seldom happens that we do not abuse *idols* when they are set up among us, for it is as when fire has been applied to a pile of wood, which must immediately burn; and wood is not more ready to be set on fire than we are to follow superstition. In the Hebrew language *idols* are very properly denominated by the word אלילים, (*ĕlīlīm,*) which the Prophet here employs, for they are empty things, and of no value.[1] And undoubtedly the Holy Spirit intended by this word to reprove the madness of men who imagined that, by relying on such inventions, they approached nearer to God; as the papists of the present day, in order to plead for the usefulness

[1] "So called," says Buxtorf, "because they are absolutely *nothing,* agreeably to that saying of the Apostle, *an idol is nothing in the world,*" (1 Cor. viii. 4.) רפאי אלל, (*rophĕē ĕlil,*) *physicians of no value,* (Job xiii. 4,) is an instance of the literal use of the word.—*Ed.*

of their *idols*, boast that they are the books of the unlearned: but we ought rather to believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit; and even the facts themselves plainly show what advantage the unlearned derive from them; for, led away by gross fancies, they imagine to themselves earthly and carnal gods. Hence Jeremiah justly declares not only that *idols* are useless, but that they are teachers of falsehood and lies. (Jer. x. 14.)

And they have bowed down[1] *before the work of their own hands.* We must also attend to this description, in which the Prophet relates that the people *bowed down before the works of their own hands;* for how stupid was it that men should not only worship wood and stone instead of God, but should honour their own workmanship with the appellation of Deity, which they cannot bestow on themselves! It is truly shocking and monstrous that, as soon as a block of wood which lay neglected has received the finishing-stroke from a mortal man, he presently worships it as if it had been made a God. Although the Prophet addresses the ancient people, the same reasoning applies to the papists, who acknowledge no majesty of God but in the works of their own hands.

Before that which their own fingers have made. The repetition is emphatic, and to the *hands* he adds the *fingers,* in order to exhibit more strongly the grossness of the crime. We must also attend to the mode of expression, which denotes adoration by means of outward gesture; not that it is unlawful among men to bend the knee or the head for the sake of paying public respect, but because he who *bows down before* an idol professes to render divine worship. Consequently, the silly talk of papists about that adoration which they call *Dulia*[2] (δουλεία) is a childish evasion; for when the Prophet speaks of religious worship he condemns universally every token of homage.[3]

9. *And the mean man boweth down.* Some commentators

[1] *They worship.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] The popish distinction between an inferior kind of adoration, called δουλεία, and a higher kind of adoration, called λατρεία, is illustrated and refuted by our Author, in the *Institutes,* vol. i. p. 141, and in the *Harmony of the Evangelists,* vol. i. p. 221.—*Ed.*

[3] That is, of homage paid to idols.—*Ed.*

read these words in immediate connection with what goes before, as if the Prophet were proceeding still farther to show the extent of their criminality. If we adopt this meaning, then by *the mean man and the mighty man* we must understand all the Israelites; as if the Prophet said that no man is pure and free from this stain. Others not improperly are of opinion that he repeats in other words what he had said about punishment, and that in this way he expresses the destruction which awaits a people forsaken by God. This will agree best with the scope of the passage, that all, both small and great, will speedily be overtaken by the ruin which lays low a whole nation; because amidst so great wickedness there was no reason to expect deliverance from the vengeance of God.

Besides, in those two expressions, *bow down* and *humble*, there is a rapid allusion to that *bowing down* which he mentioned a little before, as if he had said, "They have *bowed themselves down* before idols, therefore God will *lay them low* under a vast weight of calamities." Yet I have no doubt that he likewise attacks their pride; for it was difficult to believe that a nation so abundantly supplied with wealth would, in a short period, be overwhelmed by calamities.

Therefore forgive them not; or, *thou wilt not forgive them.* This latter clause is explained in two ways, though it does not much affect the real meaning which of the views you adopt; for the design of the Prophet is to show that towards such obstinate men God will not be appeased. If it be taken in the future tense, *thou wilt not forgive them*, the meaning will be more easily brought out; but if it be taken as a prayer, *forgive them not*, it will amount to the same thing; for we know that, when the prophets, inflamed by zeal for God, pour out prayers as under the dictation of the Spirit, they threaten just punishment against the ungodly: and we need not wonder that the Prophet, offended by crimes so numerous and so shocking, kindles into such warmth that he consigns his countrymen to destruction; for nothing was more dear to him than the sacred honour of God. But at the same time it must be understood that he makes a tacit reservation of a remnant; because he does not here speak of

every individual, but of the body of the people, which was so deeply infected by its vices that there was no hope of cure; otherwise it would have been unreasonable to give exhortations to repentance, and to hold out the hope of pardon to men who were incurable and thoroughly obstinate. The meaning therefore amounts to this, that the restoration of a new Church must not be expected till God has executed his judgments by destroying the temple.

10. *Enter into the rock.* As ungodly men, for the most part, lull themselves in excessive indifference about God's threatenings, it is customary with the prophets, when they threaten sinners, with the view of producing terror, to add lively descriptions, as if for the purpose of bringing those matters under the immediate view of men. This is the reason why the Prophet now bids despisers of God *enter into the rocks* and caves, to conceal themselves under ground. And, first, he means that the judgment of God is more to be dreaded than a thousand deaths, and that for the sake of escaping that judgment it were to be wished that they should go down into the grave. But, by addressing men themselves, he gives a more impressive illustration of the weight of the divine vengeance.

From the dread of the LORD, *and from the glory of his majesty.* Although by *the dread of God* he means the scourges by which God would take vengeance on a wicked people, yet it is not without good reason that he immediately adds, *his magnificent glory;* as if he had said, "It is according to the measure of his own glory that God ought to be dreaded by the ungodly, in whose destruction he displays his boundless power." But though the ungodly are not reformed or made to bow down by any punishment, they are forced to tremble when they feel the presence of the wrath of God. In quite a different manner do punishments instruct the elect to fear God; for, in consequence of being subdued by strokes, they learn to bear the yoke. Isaiah therefore declares that the glory of God will be more illustriously displayed when he shall come forth as a righteous judge; for when he conceals himself he is not observed, and they scarcely think of his existence.

Hence let pastors learn how they ought to deal with drowsy consciences, which must be awakened by the judgment of God, that they may regard that judgment with actual *dread.* Though we often sing to the deaf, yet terror pierces even hearts of iron, so that they are without excuse. Frequently, too, it happens that some are healed; and in like manner believers gain advantage from it, when they learn the terrific forms of punishment which await the ungodly and reprobate.

11. *The loftiness of the looks of man*[1] *shall be humbled.* Wicked men, relying on the wealth and quietness and prosperity which they at present enjoy, regard the threatenings of the Prophets with haughty disdain, and thus harden their hearts against God, and are even led to indulge in wantonness. On this account, Isaiah here determines, as we have already said, to repress their arrogance; as if he had said, "The time will come when this pride of yours, by which you vainly and madly contend against God, shall be brought down." For wicked men, though they pretend to have some religion, are yet so daring that they rage against God himself, and imagine that they are higher than God. On the other hand, by thundering against them, he lays low their haughtiness, that he alone may be exalted.

And this is what we have already said, that when crimes are allowed to pass unpunished, it is a sort of cloud held before our eyes, which hinders us from beholding the glory of the Lord; but when he takes vengeance on men's transgressions, his glory shines forth illustriously. This is also the reason which Solomon assigns why wicked men are hardened against God: it is because they think that bad and good men are equally happy in this world. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil,* (Eccl. viii. 11;) for all of them grow more insolent, and are more and more blinded.

But here he shows that, when proud men shall have been brought to their proper level, there will be nothing to prevent God from being acknowledged to be what he is. It

[1] *The lofty looks of man.*—Eng. Ver.

was indeed highly becoming that the people should, of their own accord, humbly behold the greatness of God, under whose shadow they were defended; and for this purpose the posterity of Abraham was so remarkably distinguished by numerous blessings, that it might be the mirror of the glory and holiness of God. Isaiah now threatens that, because the Jews have risen up against him, God will employ a new method of exalting his glory, that is, by their destruction. When he speaks of *lofty looks* and *loftiness*, he employs an outward gesture to denote the inward pride of the mind; for sinful confidence almost always betrays, by the very looks, a contempt of God and of men. In the same sense does David describe *the man whose eyes are lofty.* (Ps. ci. 5.)

12. *For the day of the* LORD *of hosts will be on every one that is proud and lofty.* In this verse he confirms the same thing more fully, and from the vehement manner in which he heaps up words, we may easily infer how bold was the wickedness which at that time abounded. But we shall not wonder that he labours so hard to subdue the arrogance of men, if we consider how difficult it is to bend the stubbornness of those who, relying on their wealth, are afraid of nothing, and who suppose that the design of their elevated rank is, that whatever they do shall pass unpunished. For even at the present day we experience how sensitive and passionate those men are who make arrogant claims for themselves, and how obstinately they reject all admonitions. And this is also the reason why the Prophet uses sharp language against them, instead of threatening vengeance, in general terms, against the whole nation.

Yet it is not against the princes alone, whose high rank raised them far above other men, that his invectives are launched; for not only they, but even persons of the lowest rank, often swell with pride; and, as the common proverb runs, "Every man carries within him the heart of a king." In like manner, we find that even the basest persons, if you do but prick them with a pin, vomit out the poison of intolerable arrogance. Since, therefore, this vice was so widely spread, Isaiah includes both the highest and the lowest of the people, declaring that in proportion to the forbearance which God

had exercised toward them is the severity of the impending judgment; for, in consequence of their abundance, their hearts had swollen to fierceness.

Moreover, though the letter ל, (*lamed,*)[1] which is the sign of the dative case, be sometimes superfluous, yet in this passage it retains its force; for it would appear that Isaiah appoints a fixed day, as usually happens in judicial trials. Accordingly, I interpret it to mean that God himself hath previously appointed a day on which proud men must be summoned to the judgment-seat of God, to receive a sentence of condemnation.

We may also learn from these words that God avows himself to be the enemy of all the proud. This appointing of a day is therefore to the same effect as if God declared that he cannot endure men wickedly to indulge in pride, and that they who unduly exalt themselves cannot escape being crushed by his hand. And if our minds were sincerely convinced of this, who would not abhor pride, which provokes the anger of God against us? If any person choose rather to interpret (*superbum et elatum*) *proud* and *lofty* as in the neuter gender, meaning *that which is proud and lofty,* we must understand them to refer to the fortresses, bulwarks, and fortifications; but the rules of grammar do not admit of their being applied in any other way than to persons.

13. *Upon all the cedars of Lebanon.* The allegory which is here introduced, about *the trees of Lebanon* and *the lofty mountains,* instead of obscuring, sheds light on the subject; for however high may be the wishes or endeavours of a mortal man, yet he will never be able to reach the height of the *mountains* and the *lofty trees,* which it is as easy for God to throw down as for a breath of wind to scatter the fallen leaves. Accordingly, in what may be called a painting,

[1] ליהוה. The natural rendering of "Quoniam dies Iehovæ exercituum super omnem superbum et excelsum erit" appears to be what I have given above, *for the day of the Lord of hosts will be on every one that is proud and lofty.* But if *Jehovæ* be in the dative, and not in the genitive case, the ambiguity might have been partly removed by some such collocation as the following:—*Quoniam Jehovæ exercituum erit dies,* which might have meant, *For to the Lord of hosts there will be a day,* or, *the Lord of hosts will have a day;* and such an emphatic meaning of the phrase must have been intended by our author.—*Ed.*

Isaiah shows to proud men how idle and foolish they are in believing that their elevation will be their defence. There is also an implied exaggeration, which must have contributed to heighten the terror. It cannot be supposed that God is actually angry with the mountains and trees, or that, having changed his purpose, he throws down what he has built up; but in the harmless creatures Isaiah holds out to view the judgment of God, in order more fully to convince wicked and unprincipled men that their presumption will not pass unpunished. Thus we see the reason why he mixes up the metaphors of *cedars*, *oaks*, and *mountains*.

15. *And upon every lofty tower.* What he adds about *towers* and *walls* is not figurative or metaphorical. We know how men, when they think that they are well defended, congratulate themselves that they no longer need the assistance of God. Accordingly, under the name of *towers and walls* Isaiah mentions the object of false confidence; for if any place seem to be impregnable, there do irreligious men build their nest, that they may look down from it on heaven and earth; for they imagine that they are placed beyond all the uncertainties of fortune. Isaiah therefore threatens that, when it shall please God to humble men, he will throw down all the defences on which they place a false confidence. And although those things are not in themselves evil, yet because they receive too large a share of our attention, it is with great propriety that Isaiah sharpens his pen against them.

To the same purpose is what he says about *horses* and *chariots;* for, as we are told by Micah, because men have improperly relied on earthly riches, they must be altogether deprived of them, that they may owe this preservation entirely to the hand of God. (Mic. v. 10.) A little before, he had reproved them for the abundance of their horses (ver. 7); he now addresses them about the judgment of God, and warns them that, as the only possible way of gaining the favour of God, he must take from the Jews all their horsemen, that they may no longer place sinful reliance on earthly support.

16. *And upon all the ships of Tarshish. Tarshish* was

unquestionably the Hebrew name for Cilicia; and as the Jews had much traffic with that nation, Scripture frequently mentions *the ships of Tarshish*, which are so called, because they sailed on that sea. Navigation cannot, indeed, be condemned on its own account; for, by importing and exporting articles of merchandise, it is of great advantage to mankind. Nor can any fault be found with this mode of intercourse between nations; for it is the will of God that the whole human race should be joined together by mutual acts of kindness. But as it most frequently happens that abundance leads to pride and cruelty, Isaiah reproves this kind of merchandise, which was the chief source of the wealth of the land. Besides, in that merchandise which is carried on with distant and foreign nations, there is often a large amount of tricks and dishonesty, and no limit set to the desire of gain. First, then, Isaiah means that the Jews will be deprived of riches, that they may learn to submit to God. Secondly, he describes covetousness and unlawful gains by means of a sign, as if one were to express murder by holding out a bloody sword.

And upon elegant pictures. This second part of the verse shows still more clearly that the Prophet condemns navigation, which had brought many corruptions into the land. It is too frequent and common, that riches are followed by luxury, effeminacy, and a superfluity of pleasures, which we commonly see in wealthy countries and commercial cities; for those who trade by sea in distant countries are not satisfied with the commodities obtained at home, but carry away new luxuries which were formerly unknown. Since, therefore, wealth is usually the mother of superfluity, the Prophet here mentions costly furniture, as if he had said that the Jews, by adorning their houses at great expense, draw down upon themselves the judgment of God; for he employs the word *pictures*, by a well-known figure of speech, to denote rich tapestry, and the productions of Phrygia, and vessels framed with consummate skill.

It is certain that the manners of men are corrupted, when they eagerly pursue, in every direction, superfluous enjoyments. And we see how destruction was brought on the

Roman Empire by delicacies of this nature; for before they travelled into Greece, the greatest moderation prevailed among them; and no sooner had Asia been vanquished than they began to grow soft and effeminate; and when their eyes were dazzled by pictures, furniture, precious stones, and tapestry, and their nostrils regaled by ointments and perfumes, all their senses were immediately overpowered, and, by imitating the luxury of the East as a higher form of civilization, they began gradually to indulge in every kind of debauchery.

17. *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down.* The Prophet declares that he had his eye on *men*, when he described the various kinds of *loftiness;* for God is not displeased with the steep mountains or tall cedars, which he created, but informs us that the whole evil lies in *men*, who vainly trust to what is high and lofty. It may be objected, that it frequently happens that wicked men are not rendered more humble by chastisement, but, on the contrary, become more fierce and obstinate, as is evident from the case of Pharaoh, whose hardness of heart no plagues could subdue, (Ex. viii. 15, and ix. 34;) and consequently that what the Prophet here threatens does not always take place. I reply, he does not describe the effect of chastisement, as if God bent rebellious men to obey him; but the meaning of this passage is, that, although the hearts of the reprobate be not changed, yet the Lord will not cease to inflict punishment upon them, till their haughtiness and presumption are brought low. For, trusting to their wealth and fortifications, they congratulate themselves, as we have said, on their safety, and do not fear God. But whatever may be the nature of their defences, the Lord will easily subdue and lay them low, and that not only by one or another chastisement, but by chastisements so numerous and so severe, that they will at length be beaten down and subdued, will cease to rise up against him, and will acknowledge that they gain nothing by their insolence and presumption. The next clause, *and the* LORD *alone shall be exalted*, has been already explained.

18. *And the idols he will utterly abolish.* As he had formerly, in his reproof, joined idolatry with luxury and covet-

ousness, and other vices ; so he now joins them in the threatening of punishment.

19. *And they shall enter into the holes of the rocks.* He had formerly used other words when addressing them in the second person, *Enter into the rock,* (ver. 10,) that he might inflict a severer stroke on their minds. But now he declares what they will do, and says that they must *enter ;* and hence it is evident that the former statement was not an exhortation, but a severe denunciation of the wrath of God, in order to terrify wicked and obstinate men, who despise all warnings and all threatenings.

From the presence of the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty. What he adds about *the terror of* God must be understood to mean that terror which was thrown into them by the Chaldeans and Assyrians, whose hand he called a little before, and now also calls, *the glory of God ;* for God employed their agency to chastise his people. Although they were wicked and treacherous, yet they promoted the glory of God ; for even the devil himself contributes in some way to the *glory* of God, though contrary to his wish. Thus he speaks of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, because in the punishments which the Lord will inflict on the Jews by their agency we may behold his *glory.*

The same thing is confirmed by the word *Arise,* which means to go before the judgment-seat. In the phrase which immediately follows, לערץ הארץ (*lăărōtz hāāretz,*) *to shake terribly the earth,* there is an elegant allusion or play on words, which can hardly be conveyed in any other language.[1] He says that the Lord *ariseth,* because he appears to sleep so long as he delays his judgments. But he *ariseth,* when he comes forth as a judge to inflict punishments on the wicked ; so as to make it evident to men that nothing escapes the knowledge, or is hidden from the eyes, of Him who permits no crime to pass unpunished.

20. *In that day a man will cast away his idols.* Idolaters are amazingly delighted with their own superstitions and

[1] The "play on words," which turns entirely on the sound of the Hebrew noun and verb, cannot be expressed in a translation. Our author has illustrated it by *ad terram terrendam,* which again may be fully imitated by this alliteration, "to *terrify* the *terrestrial* globe."—*Ed.*

ungodly worship; for although they abound in enormities and crimes, still they betake themselves to this refuge, that they imagine that their worship appeases God. Just as in the present day, if we should represent the crimes and lawless passions of every kind which abound among the papists, they certainly will not be able to deny our statements, but will flatter themselves on this ground, that they have a plausible form of worship, and will believe that this vail covers all their crimes. Accordingly, the Prophet deprives idolaters of this cloak, and threatens that they will no longer be able to conceal their pollution; for the Lord will compel them to throw away their idols, that they may acknowledge that they had no good reason for placing their hope and confidence in them.

In short, they will be ashamed of their foolishness; for in prosperity they think that they enjoy the favour of God, as if he showed that he takes delight in their worship; and they cannot be convinced to the contrary, until God actually make evident how greatly he abhors them. It is only when they are brought into adversity that they begin to acknowledge their wickedness, as Hosea strikingly illustrates by comparing them to whores, who do not acknowledge their wickedness so long as they make gain, and live in splendour, but who, when they are deprived of those enjoyments, and forsaken by their lovers, begin to think of their wretchedness and disgrace, and enter into the way of repentance, of which they had never thought while they enjoyed luxury. (Hosea ii. 5.) The same thing almost always happens with idolaters, who are not ashamed of their wickedness, so as to *cast away their idols*, until they have been visited by very sore distress, and made almost to think that they are ruined.

Which they made; that is, which were made for them by the agency of workmen. Nor was this an unnecessary addition; for he means that pretended gods are not entitled to adoration: and what sort of gods can they be that have been made by men, seeing that God exists from himself, and never had a beginning? It is therefore highly foolish, and contrary to reason, that men should worship the work of their

own hands. So then, by this expression, he aggravates their criminality, that idols, though they are composed of gold or silver, or some other perishable material, and have been manufactured by men, are yet worshipped instead of God; and at the same time he states the reason why they are displeasing to God: it is, because they are worshipped. On what pretence will the papists now excuse their ungodliness? for they cannot deny that they render adoration to images; and wherever such worship is performed, there ungodliness is clearly proved.

Into the holes of the moles and of the bats. By *the holes of the moles* he means any filthy places in which they are disgracefully concealed.

21. *And they shall enter into the clefts of the rocks.* This repetition is not superfluous, though Isaiah again employs the same words which he had lately used; for what is so difficult as to impress on the minds of men sincere fear of God? Nor is it only in hypocrites that we perceive this, but in ourselves, if we bestow careful attention; for how many things are presented to us by which our minds ought to be deeply affected, and yet we are scarcely moved! More especially, it was necessary that this judgment of God should be earnestly placed before hypocrites, who took delight in wickedness. But now he points out the severity of God's vengeance by this consideration, that the ungodly choose rather to be swallowed up by the deepest gulfs than to come under the eye of God. This, too, is the passage from which Christ borrowed the threatening which he pronounces on the Jews, *In that day shall they say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Hide us.* (Luke xxiii. 30.)

22. *Cease therefore from man.* These words are clearly connected with what goes before, and have been improperly separated from them by some interpreters. For Isaiah, after having addressed the ungodly in threatenings concerning the judgment of God, exhorts them to refrain from deluding themselves by groundless confidence; as if he had said, "I see that you are blinded and intoxicated by false hope, so that no argument can prevail with you; and this you do, because you claim too much for yourselves. But man is no-

thing; and you have to do with God, who can reduce the whole world to nothing by a single act of his will."

Whose breath is in his nostrils. The former part of the verse is explained in various ways; for some interpret it as referring to Christ, and view the word רוח, (*rūach,*) which we render *breath,* as denoting *violence,* by a comparison which is frequently used in other parts of Scripture;[1] and the *nostril,* as denoting *anger,* because the outward sign of *anger* is in the nostrils. They bring out the meaning in this manner: "Beware of provoking the anger of Christ."[2] But if we examine the passage closely, that exposition will be found to be at variance with the meaning of the words.

Others understand it as relating to men in general, but explain it by that saying, *Fear not them who kill the body.* (Matt. x. 28.) But neither can this interpretation be admitted, which does not agree either with the time or the occasion, since there was no reason for dissuading them from the fear of men. But, as I have already said, the context will quickly remove all doubt; for the commencement of the following chapter clearly explains and confirms what is here stated; and he who made this division has improperly separated those things which ought to have been joined together. For the Prophet is about to add, "The Lord will take from you those things which so highly elevate your minds, and put you in such high spirits. Your confidence is foolish and groundless." Such is the connection of what he now says, *Cease therefore from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.*

But first we must see what is meant by *breath in the nostril.* It denotes human weakness, or, that the life of man is like a *breath,* which immediately vanishes away. And as David says, *If the Lord take away the breath, man returns to the dust.* (Ps. civ. 29.) Again, *His breath will go out, and he will return to his earth.* (Ps. cxlvi. 4.) And again, *They are flesh, a breath that passeth away and cometh not again.* (Ps. lxxviii. 39.) Since, therefore, nothing is more weak or frail than our life, what means that confidence, as if our

[1] In 1 Kings xix. 11, רוח (*rūach*) signifies *wind,* which the accompanying epithets show to have been strong and violent.—*Ed.*

[2] Instead of rendering, *Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,* they would render, *Cease from the man who is terrible in his wrath.*—*Ed.*

strength were deeply rooted? We ought therefore to *cease from man;* that is, we ought to lay aside groundless confidence; because man has his *breath in his nostril,* for when his *breath* goes out, he is immediately dissolved like water. We speak here of the *breath* of life, for nothing is more frail.

Besides, when we are forbidden to place confidence in men, let us begin with ourselves; that is, let us not in any respect trust to our own wisdom or industry. Secondly, let us not depend on the aid of man, or on any creature; but let us place our whole confidence in the Lord. *Cursed,* says Jeremiah, *is he who trusteth in man,* and who placeth his strength and his aid in *flesh,* that is, in outward resources. (Jer. xvii. 5.)

For wherein is he to be accounted of? This is the true method of repressing haughtiness. Nothing is left to men on which they ought to congratulate themselves; for the meaning is as if the Prophet had said that the whole glory of the flesh is of no value. It ought also to be observed that this is spoken comparatively, in order to inform us, that if there be in us anything excellent, it is not our own, but is held by us at the will of another. We know that God has adorned the human race with gifts which ought not to be despised. We know, also, that some excel others; but as the greater part of men neglect God, and flatter themselves beyond measure; and as irreligious men go so far as to think that they are more than gods, Isaiah wisely separates men from God, which the Holy Spirit also does in many other parts of Scripture: for when we look at them in themselves, we perceive more fully the frail, and fading, and transitory nature of their condition. Accordingly, as soon as men begin to make the smallest claim for themselves, they ought to have an opportunity of perceiving their vanity, that they may acknowledge themselves to be nothing. This single expression throws down the pompous applauses of free-will and merits, by which papists extol themselves in opposition to the grace of God. That intoxicated self-love, in which irreligious men indulge, is also shaken off. Lastly, we are brought back to God, the Author of every blessing, that we may not suppose that anything excellent is to be found but in him; for he has not received what is due to him, until

the world has been stripped of all wisdom, and strength, and righteousness, and, in a word, of all praise.

CHAPTER III.

1. For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

2. The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

3. The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

4. And I will give children *to be* their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

5. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

6. When a man shall take hold of his brother, of the house of his father, *saying*, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and *let* this ruin *be* under thy hand:

7. In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house *is* neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

8. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings *are* against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

9. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide *it* not: woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

10. Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be* well *with him;* for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11. Woe unto the wicked! *it shall*

1. Quoniam ecce Dominator Iehova exercituum, Ierosolymæ et Judæ vigorem et vim adimet, omnem vigorem panis, omnem vigorem aquæ,

2. Fortem, et virum bellicosum, judicem et prophetam, et divinum et senem,

3. Ducem quinquagenarium, et conspicuum, senatorem, eximium quemque inter artifices et disertum, (*vel, intelligentem arcani sermonis.*)

4. Et constituam pueros illis principes, et parvuli dominabuntur eis.

5. Violenter aget populus quisque in alium, vir in proximum suum; insolescet adolescens contra senem, contemptus adversus honoratum.

6. Cùm apprehenderit quisque fratrem suum e familia patris sui, Vestimentum, dicens, est tibi: Princeps noster eris: ruina hæc in manu tua:

7. Is jurabit in illa die, dicens, Non ero curator; nam domi meæ neque panis est, neque vestimentum; itaque ne me principem populi constituatis.

8. Certè corruit Ierusalem, et Iuda cecidit; quoniam lingua eorum et studia contra Iehovam, ad exacerbandos oculos gloriæ ejus.

9. Probatio vultus eorum respondet in ipsis: (*vel, adversus ipsos:*) peccatum suum, sicut Sodoma, prædicaverunt, neque dissimulârunt. Væ animæ ipsorum, quia accersiverunt sibi malum.

10. Dicite justo, bene erit, quia fructus manuum suarum comedent.

11. Væ impio, malè erit; quo-

be ill *with him;* for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

12. *As for* my people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause *thee* to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

13. The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

14. The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor *is* in your houses.

15. What mean ye *that* ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

16. Moreover, the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking and mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

17. Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

18. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet,* and *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon,

19. The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

20. The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings,

21. The rings, and nose-jewels,

22. The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins,

23. The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.

24. And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and* burning instead of beauty.

25. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

niam secundum opera manuum suarum rependetur ei.

12. Populi mei exactores sunt parvuli, et mulieres illi dominantur. Populo mi, qui te gubernant seducunt, et viam semitarum tuarum depravant.

13. Stat ad disceptandum Iehova, et præstò est ad judicandos populos.

14. Iehova in judicium veniet cum senibus populi sui, et cum principibus ejus; et vos perdidistis vineam, estque rapina pauperis in domibus vestris.

15. Quid vobis quòd contunditis populum meum, et facies pauperum commolitis? dicit Dominus Iehova exercituum.

16. Dicit quoque Iehova, Quoniam superbiunt filiæ Sion, et porrecto collo incedunt, oculisque vacantibus, et ambulando plaudendoque ambulant, tinnitumque pedibus suis excitant:

17. Ideo decalvabit Dominus verticem filiarum Sion, et Dominus pudenda earum nudabit.

18. In die illa auferet Dominus ornamentum crepitaculorum, et reticula, et lunulas,

19. Olfactoria, armillas, et mitras,

20. Tiaras, crurum ornatus, vittas, bullas, et inaures,

21. Annulos et monilia narium,

22. Mutatorias vestes, palliola, pepla, et acus,

23. Specula, et sindones, calyptras et theristra.

24. Et erit pro suavi aromate putredo, et pro cinctura laceratio, et pro cincinnis calvitium; pro balteo cinctura sacci, adustio pro venustate.

25. Viri tui in gladio cadent, et robur tuum in bello.

26. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she, *being* desolate, shall sit upon the ground.

26. Mœrebunt ac lugebunt portæ ejus; et ipsa desolata humi jacebit.

1. *For, behold.* We stated, a little before, that this is the same subject which the Prophet began to treat towards the close of the former chapter; for he warns the Jews that their wealth, however great it may be, will be of no avail to prevent the wrath of God, which, when it has once been kindled, will burn up all their defences. Hence it follows that they are chargeable with excessive madness, when, in order to drive away their alarm, they heap up their forces, strength, and warlike accoutrements, consultations, armour, abundant supply of provisions, and other resources.

The demonstrative particle הִנֵּה, (*hinnēh,*) *behold,* is employed not only to denote certainty, but to express the shortness of time, as if Isaiah caused wicked men to be eye-witnesses of the event; for it frequently happens that they who do not venture openly to ridicule the judgments of God pass them by, as if they did not at all relate to them, or were still at a great distance. "What is that to us?" say they; "or, if they shall ever happen, why should we be miserable before the time? Will it not be time enough to think of those calamities when they actually befall us?" Since, therefore, wicked men, in order to set at nought the judgments of God, dig for themselves lurking-places of this description, on this account the Prophet presses them more closely and earnestly, that they may not imagine that the hand of God is distant, or vainly expect that it will be relaxed.

The Lord Jehovah of hosts will take away from Jerusalem. This is also the reason why he calls God *the Lord* and *Jehovah of hosts,* that the majesty of God may terrify their drowsy and sluggish minds; for God has no need of titles, but our ignorance and stupidity must be aroused by perceiving his glory. First, the Prophet threatens that the Jews will have the whole produce of the harvest taken from them, so that they will perish through famine. Immediately afterwards he speaks in the same manner about military guards, and all that relates to the good order of the state. Hence we may infer that the Jews boasted of the prosperity which they at

that time enjoyed, so as to entertain a foolish belief that they were protected against every danger. But Isaiah threatens that not only the whole country, but Jerusalem herself, which was the invincible fortress of the nation, will be exposed to God's chastisements; as if he had said, "The wrath of God will not only fall on every part of the body, but will pierce the very heart."

The power and the strength.[1] As to the words משען ומשענה, (*mashgnēn ūmashgnēnāh,*) which differ only in this respect, that one is in the masculine, and the other in the feminine gender, I have no doubt that the Prophet intended by this change to express more fully the certainty that supports of every kind would be broken; and therefore I have translated them *the power and the strength.*[2] I do not agree with those interpreters who view it as referring to the persons of men, for it more appropriately denotes all supports, whatever may be their nature.

Still it is doubtful whether the Prophet limits it to food, or extends it to all other kinds of support, which he mentions immediately afterwards. But it is natural to suppose that by משען ומשענה (*mashgnēn ūmashgnēnāh*) is included generally everything that is necessary to sustain the order of the city or of the people; and next that, for the sake of explanation, he enumerates some particulars. The first clause therefore means, "God will take away every help and assistance by which you think that you are upheld, so that nothing whatever may be left to support you."

Next, he adds, what will be their want and nakedness; and he begins, as we have said, with food and nourishment, which hold the first rank in sustaining the life of men.

[1] "Heb. 'the support masculine and the support feminine;' that is, every kind of support, whether great or small, strong or weak. *Al kanitz, wal kanitzan;* the wild beast, male and female: proverbially applied both to fishing and hunting; that is, I seized the prey, great or little, good or bad. From hence, as Schultens observes, is explained Is. iii. 1, literally, *the male and female stay;* that is, the strong and weak, the great and small."—*Chappelow*, quoted by *Lowth.*

[2] Calvin has imitated the Hebrew phrase by the rendering *vigorem et vim;* employing two words, of which one is in the masculine and the other in the feminine gender, and both begin with the same letter, while each of them denotes *strength.* Our English version has imitated the alliteration by *the stay and the staff.*—*Ed.*

Now there are two ways in which God takes away the *strength* of bread and water; either when he deprives us of victuals, or when he takes from them the power of nourishing us; for unless God impart to our food a hidden power, the greatest abundance of it that we may possess will do us no good. (Lev. xxvi. 26.) Hence in another passage God is said *to break the staff of bread,* (Ezek. iv. 16,) when *the bakers deliver the bread by weight,* and yet it does not yield satisfaction. And this comparison ought to be carefully observed, in order to inform us that, even though the belly be well filled, we shall always be hungry, there being nothing but the secret blessing of God that can feed or support us.

Though the hunger which the Prophet threatens in this passage may be understood to mean that the fields will be unproductive, or, that God will take away from the Jews every kind of food, yet, since the Prophets are generally accustomed to borrow their forms of expression from the law, this interpretation will apply very well. For he might simply have said, "I will take away the bread and wine;" but he expresses something more secret when he speaks of the support *of bread and water;* as if he had said that, though the people be not reduced to famine, yet God will make them, even while they are rioting in gluttony, to pine with hunger; for when the blessing of God is withdrawn, all its usefulness will vanish away. We may sum it up in this manner, that the people will have no food to strengthen them; either because they will not have bread and water, or, if they have, will derive no advantage from them.

2. *The strong man and the man of war.* He mentions other ends which contribute to the safety and good order either of nations or of cities. Of these he threatens that the Jews will be wholly deprived, so that they will neither have wisdom or bravery at home, nor military forces abroad. He is not careful to attend to order, but is satisfied with giving a short abridgment, and mixes one subject with another. He begins with *men of war,* into whose hands was committed the defence of the country. God sometimes takes them away by death, and sometimes by making them

soft and effeminate. The latter is more frequent, so that posterity degenerates from the bravery of ancestors, and those who were formerly courageous become, in process of time, cowardly and unfit for war. But we see also that the former sometimes happens, in consequence of which the boldest men suddenly lose heart.

The judge and the prophet. We know that, in the Hebrew language, the word *judge* stands for every kind of governors; and it is certain that by *prophets* are meant every kind of teachers. Accordingly, he threatens that the civil government will be set aside, and that instruction will be at an end, and that thus the Jews will be destroyed; and, indeed, magistrates and teachers hold the same place in the commonwealth that the two eyes do in the human body.

And diviners and old men.[1] I consider the same rank as before to be denoted by *old men*, who are more fit for governing, because age brings along with it prudence, wisdom, and gravity. As to the word *diviner*, though it is used in a bad sense in Scripture, yet here it appears to be used in a good sense, when Isaiah enumerates those things which contribute to preserve the good order of a city and of a kingdom. This term might, therefore, be applied to a soothsayer, who *divines* or penetrates into dark matters, not by omens or superstitious arts, but by extraordinary acuteness and skill. But as God forbade them to consult magicians, soothsayers, and *diviners*, (Deut. xviii. 20,) and as Balaam himself declares that *there is no divination against Israel*, (Numb. xxiii. 23,) I do not quarrel with those who would prefer to use the word *diviner* as denoting magical *divinations;* nor will there be any absurdity in enumerating among the punishments of the nation, that it would be deprived also of those aids which were sinful and criminal; for along with the altar and sacrifices Hosea mentions *teraphim.*[2] (Hos. iii. 4.)

[1] *And the prudent and the ancient.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "The Prophet," says CALVIN, "seems to speak here of idols, for he afterwards adds *teraphim;* and teraphim were no doubt images, (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30,) which the superstitious used while worshipping their fictitious gods, as we read in many places. The king of Babylon is said to have consulted the teraphim; and it is said that Rachel stole the teraphim,

The captain of fifty. He employs this term agreeably to the custom which then prevailed; for as the Romans had *centurions,* or *captains of hundreds,* so the Jews had *captains,* or *rulers of fifties,* which the Greeks call πεντηκοντάρχους, but as that custom did not exist among the Latins, so the name was unknown among them. By *persons of venerable aspect*[1] he means those whose reputation for bravery gave them influence among the people.

The senator.[2] The word יוֹעֵץ, (*yōgnētz,*) for which I have put *senator,* may be applied to men in private life who are eminent for prudence; but as it is strictly applicable to *counsellors,* who discharge a public office, I resolved not to depart from the common opinion.

The skilful artificer. Because the mechanical arts are not less advantageous for upholding the prosperity of a nation, and for the support of animal life, Isaiah likewise mentions that, through the want of them, the destruction of the Jews is at hand.

And the eloquent.[3] The word which is placed last in the enumeration has been variously explained by commentators. Literally it means, "skilled in muttering, or in a subdued tone of speech." Now since the heathen oracles give out their replies by *whisperings* or *mutterings,* some think that the word denotes *enchantments.* A better exposition is given by those who interpret לחש (*lāhash*) to mean *secret designs;* but as a style which is both mysterious and weighty may be not inappropriately denoted by this word, I had no hesitation in rendering it by the word *eloquent.* Yet if it be thought preferable to view it as denoting wise and cautious men, who, though not qualified for public speaking, give private advices of what may profitably be done, I have no objection.

and shortly after Laban calls the teraphim his gods."—*Com. on the Twelve Minor Prophets,* vol. i. p. 130.

[1] *The honourable man.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] *The counsellor.*—Eng. Ver.

[3] In a marginal reading of the text our author renders this phrase by *skilled in mysterious discourse.* "The powerful in persuasion."—*Lowth.* "The expert dealer in charms."—*Bishop Stock.* "לחש is to *whisper* or *mutter* certain words, by which jugglers pretended to charm noxious creatures, and to deprive them of their power of hurting."—*Parkhurst.*

We must attend to this comprehensive description of a well-regulated state. For Isaiah has placed first corn and other things necessary for bodily support; secondly, military forces; thirdly, skill in governing a nation and the various parts of civil government; fourthly, the prophetical office; and fifthly, the mechanical arts. With these ornaments does God adorn the nations which he intends to render safe and sound; and, on the other hand, he takes them from those nations which he intends utterly to destroy. Let us, therefore, know that everything which we find to be profitable for the support of life flows from the undeserved goodness of God. Hence also there follows another instruction, namely, that we ought to beware lest, by our ingratitude, we deprive ourselves of those excellent gifts of God.

4. *And I will appoint children to be their princes.*[1] That the vengeance of God may be more manifest, he now describes how sad and wretched will be the change, when competent and faithful rulers shall be taken from among them, and God shall put cowardly and worthless persons in their room. By *children* are meant not only those who are so by age, but also by mind and conduct, such as delicate and effeminate persons, who are destitute of courage and cannot wield the sword intrusted to them. He does not here carry out the contrast, clause by clause; for he thought it enough to point out one way in which a commonwealth is speedily ruined; that is, when its rulers are weak and foolish men, like *children*, who have no gravity or wisdom. But it must be laid down as a principle, that no man is qualified for governing a commonwealth unless he have been appointed to it by God, and be endued with uncommon excellence. Plato, too, understood this matter well: for though, being a heathen, he had no true knowledge of this kind, yet his quick sagacity enabled him to perceive that no man is fit and qualified for public government who has not been prepared for it by God in an extraordinary measure; for public government proceeds from God alone, and in like manner every part of it must be upheld by him. Besides, they whom the Lord does not govern have nothing left for them but to

[1] *And I will give children to be their princes.*—Eng. Ver.

be *children*, or rather to be twice *children*, that is, destitute of all skill and of all wisdom.

Now the Lord executes this vengeance in two ways; because it frequently happens, that when we appear to have men who are grave and skilful in business, no sooner do they come to action than they stumble like blind men, and have no more wisdom than children; for the Lord deprives them of that remarkable ability which they had formerly received from him, and stuns them, as if he had struck them with a thunderbolt. But sometimes the Lord proceeds more gently, and gradually removes men of extraordinary ability, who were fit for ruling, and commits the reins of government to those who were unable to govern a family, or even a single child. When these things happen, it is very certain that destruction is not far off.

Besides, it deserves our notice, as I lately mentioned, that a well-regulated commonwealth is a singular gift of God, when the various orders of judges and senators, soldiers, captains, artificers, and teachers, aid each other by mutual intercourse, and join in promoting the general safety of the whole people. For when the Prophet threatens, and pronounces it to be a very severe punishment, that these things shall be taken away, he plainly shows that those eminent and uncommon gifts of God are necessary for the safety of nations. Accordingly, he here commends the office of magistrates, and captains, and soldiers, and likewise the office of teachers. This deserves our notice in opposition to fanatics, who endeavour to banish from the world the power of using the sword, together with all civil government and order. But the Prophet declares that these things are not taken away or removed unless when God is angry. It follows, therefore, that they who oppose, and, as far as lies in their power, set aside or destroy such benefits, are wicked men and enemies of the public safety.

He likewise commends instruction, without which a commonwealth cannot stand; for, as Solomon says, *where prophecy is not, the nation must be ruined.* (Prov. xxix. 18.) At the same time, he commends the mechanical arts, agriculture, manual occupations of every description, architecture,

and such like, which we cannot dispense with; for all artizans of every kind, who contribute what is useful to men, are the servants of God, and have the same end in view with those who were formerly mentioned, namely, the preservation of mankind.

The same thing must be said about war; for, although lawful, war ought to be nothing else than an attempt to obtain peace; yet sometimes an engagement is unavoidable, that they who have the power of the sword may use it, and defend themselves and their followers by arms. War, therefore, is not in itself to be condemned; for it is the means of preserving the commonwealth. But neither must eloquence be despised; for it is often needed, both in public and in private life, that something may be clearly and fully explained and demonstrated to be true. This is also reckoned among the gifts and important blessings of God, when a state abounds in wise and eloquent men, *who can contend with the adversaries in the gate.* (Ps. cxxvii. 5.)

This passage may be thus summed up, "When God takes away those gifts, and alters the condition of a people, in whatever way this takes place, either by changing the form of government, or by taking away the rulers, the anger of God ought to be acknowledged;" for, as Hosea says, *he taketh away kings in his wrath, and appointeth them in his indignation.* (Hos. xiii. 11.) Let us not, therefore, ascribe these changes to chance or other causes.

5. *The people will oppress every man his neighbour.* He describes the utmost confusion, which was about to overtake the Jews, when order was destroyed or relaxed; and this will happen to all nations, as soon as government is removed or falls to the ground. We know how great is the wantonness of the human mind, when every man is hurried along by ambition, and, in short, how furious the lawless passions are when they are laid under no restraint. There is no reason, therefore, to wonder if, when the judgment-seats have been laid low, every man insults his neighbour, cruelty abounds, and licentiousness rages without control. If we considered this wisely, we would set a higher value on the kindness of God, when he preserves us in any tolerable condition, and

does not allow us to be lamentably ruined. Hence it is evident that they who direct or apply their minds to sap the foundations of civil government are the open enemies of mankind, or rather, they are in no respect different from wild beasts.

But this confusion described by the Prophet is most disgraceful, that a child shall dare to insult an old man, that the dregs of a low and despised multitude shall rise up against nobles and men of high reputation; for it is the most preposterous of all things that modesty shall be thrown away, so that they who were worthy of veneration shall be treated with contempt. And yet this spectacle, so shameful and revolting, must unavoidably be exhibited when civil government has been overthrown. As to my rendering of the verb נגש (*niggash*) in an active sense, *to oppress*, I was forced to adopt it, for otherwise the meaning of the passage would have been imperfect.

6. *When every man shall take hold of his brother.* As this verse is closely connected with the former, and proceeds without interruption as far as the phrase *he shall swear*, the particle כי (*ki*) is evidently taken for an adverb of time. For Isaiah, intending to express the extreme wretchedness of the people, says that there will be no man who will undertake to govern them, though he were requested to do so. To such an extent unquestionably does ambition prevail among men, that many are always eager to contend for power, and endeavour to obtain it even at the hazard of their lives. In every age the whole world has been convulsed by the desire of obtaining kingly power; and there is not a village so inconsiderable as not to contain men who willingly undertake to become rulers; and all this proves that man is an animal desirous of honour. Hence it follows that everything is in a deplorable condition, when that dignity is not only despised but obstinately rejected; for the mournful calamity has reached its lowest depth, when that which men naturally desire with the greatest ardour is universally disdained.

Isaiah mentions other circumstances of an aggravating nature, tending to show that the Jews will rather lay aside every feeling of humanity and compassion than undertake

the office of rulers. If one shall refuse to rule foreign nations, it will not perhaps be thought so wonderful; but when the preservation of brethren is in question, it is excessively unkind to decline the honourable office. It is therefore a proof that matters are utterly desperate, when the office of ruler is disdainfully rejected by that man to whom his kinsmen appeal, by entreating his support and throwing themselves on his protection. Now, since princes are commonly selected on account of their wealth, or, at least, kingly power is not usually bestowed on any who have not a moderate share of riches, lest poverty should lay them open to contempt and reproach, or drive them to unworthy means of gain, he likewise adds this circumstance, that though they are able to bear the burden, still they will not accept of it; as if he had said, "Not only the common people, but also the nobles and the wealthy, decline the task of government."

The phrase *take hold* is likewise emphatic, for it means to "lay hands" on a person; as if Isaiah had said that those who shall wish to obtain a prince will not employ flatteries and entreaties, but will proceed with disorder and violence to seize on some person, and endeavour to compel him to occupy the throne.

Let this ruin be under thy hand. This last circumstance is not less weighty. The meaning is, "At least if you have any compassion or humanity, do not fail to aid us in our extreme wretchedness." For when a multitude of men, like a scattered flock, bewailing with tears their ruinous condition, implore the protection of a shepherd, he who will not stretch out a helping hand must have a heart as hard as iron. Some translate it as if, by a figure of speech, (hypallage,) one word had been put for another, *Let thy hand be under this ruin;* that is, for the sake of upholding it.

7. *In that day shall he swear.* The word *swear* expresses an absolute and vehement refusal; for frequently he who at first excuses himself, or declares that he will not do it, at length yields to entreaty; but he who, in refusing, employs an oath, shuts out all hope, because he gives them to understand that his purpose is firm and decided. Perhaps, too, the phrase *in that day,* means "*immediately,* without any

delay, and without long consultation;" but as it may also be viewed demonstratively, (δεικτικῶς,) as pointing out more fully the time of the calamity, I do not express a strong opinion. The general meaning is obvious, that their ruinous condition will be past remedy.

As to the word חבש, (*chōbēsh*,) though commentators differ in their interpretation of it, yet I cheerfully concur with those who think that the metaphor is here borrowed from surgeons;[1] for nothing can more fully meet the case. It is as if one, to whom application had been made to heal a sick man, should declare that he has no skill in the art of healing, or that the disease is too inveterate to admit of being cured.

The next copulative ו, (*vau*,) means *for;* as if he had said, "And undoubtedly I have not ability to do so."[2] His meaning therefore is, that the state of affairs will be so desperate, that no man, even when matters are at the worst, will venture to take measures for their defence.

8. *For Jerusalem is ruined.* Lest it should be thought that God is excessively cruel, when he punishes his people with such severity, the Prophet here explains briefly the reason of the calamity; as if he had said that the destruction of that ungodly people is righteous, because in so many ways they have persisted in provoking God. And thus he cuts off all ground of complaint; for we know with what insolent fury the world breaks out, when it is chastised with more than ordinary severity. He says that they were ready, both by words and by actions, to commit every kind of crimes. In speaking of their destruction, he employs such language as if it had already taken place; though the past may be taken for the future, as in many other passages.

[1] חבש (*chābăsh*) literally signifies *to bind. I will not be a binder;* that is, "I will not be one who binds up your wounds." Jarchi renders it, "*I will not be a binder;* that is, I will not be one of those who *bind up.*" His annotator, Breithaupt, explains it thus: "that is, who employ any remedy, or apply a plaster, teaching in the school or synagogue what should be done, and what should be avoided." This accords with the rendering, *healer*, as in the English version, which is supported by that of Lowth, "I will not be a healer of thy breaches."—*Ed.*

[2] ובביתי, (*ūbĕbēthi*,) AND *in my house;* that is, FOR *in my house is neither bread nor clothing.*—*Ed.*

To provoke the eyes of his glory. This mode of expression aggravates the crime, as denoting that they had intentionally resolved to insult God; for those things which are done before our eyes, if they are displeasing to us, are the more offensive. It is true that wicked men mock God, as if they were able to deceive him; but as nothing, however it may be concealed, escapes his view, Isaiah brings it as a reproach against them, that they openly and shamelessly, in his very presence, indulged in the commission of crimes. The word *glory* also deserves our attention; for it is a proof of extraordinary madness, if we have no feeling of reverence, when the majesty of God is presented to our view. God had so illustriously displayed his *glory* before the nation of Israel, that they ought justly to have been humbled, if they had any remains of shame or of modesty. Whatever, then, may be the murmurings of wicked men against God, or their complaints of his severity, the cause of all the calamities which they endure will be found to be in their own hands.

9. *The proof of their countenance will answer in them,* or, *will answer against them.*[1] As the Prophet had to do with impudent and brazen-faced hypocrites, who impudently boasted that they were good men; so he says that their countenance testifies what kind of persons they are, and that it will not be necessary to bring witnesses from a distance, in order to prove their wickedness; for *to answer* means "to bear testimony," or "to confess." Although, therefore, they disguise their face and countenance, so that they frequently deceive others, yet God compells them to show and prove what they are; so that, in spite of themselves, they carry, as it were, in their forehead a mark of their deceit and hypocrisy.

Some explain it, that their crimes are so manifest that they cannot avoid seeing, as in a mirror, the baseness which they desire to conceal. But the former meaning is confirmed by what immediately follows, that they *declared their sin in the same manner as the inhabitants of Sodom.* By these words he intimates that they devoted themselves to iniquity in such a manner, that they boasted of their trans-

[1] See page 122.

gressions without any shame; as if it had been honourable and praiseworthy in them to trample on every distinction between right and wrong, and not to indulge in every kind of wickedness. On this account he compares them to the inhabitants of *Sodom*, (Gen. xviii. 20; xix. 5,) who were so much blinded by their lusts, that they rushed, with brutish stupidity, to everything base. So, then, this is *the answer of the countenance*, which he mentioned a little before, that they carry about with them plain tokens of impiety, which are abundantly sufficient to prove their guilt.

Woe unto their soul! Here he declares what was formerly mentioned, that the whole cause of their calamities is to be found in themselves; for by their sins and iniquities they provoked the Lord; and consequently that they have no means of evasion, that it is useless to contrive idle pretences, because the evil itself dwells in their bones; as if he had said, "God cannot be accused, as if he punished you unjustly. Acknowledge that it has been done by yourselves; give glory to a righteous judge, and lay the whole blame on yourselves."

10. *Say, it shall be well with the righteous.* Before quoting the opinions of others, I shall point out the true meaning. As punishments so severe commonly present to pious minds an exceedingly sharp temptation, and especially since hardly any public calamities occur which do not involve good men along with the bad; so the Prophet—at least, in my opinion—reminds them of the providence of God, which never confounds anything, but even, when there is apparent confusion, never ceases to distinguish between good and bad men.

But there are various ways in which this passage is explained; for some render it, "*Say to the righteous man, because he is good, therefore he shall eat the fruit of his hands.*" From that interpretation this meaning is obtained: "I wish and command the godly to be of good cheer; for with whatever severity I may punish the crimes of the nation, still it shall be well with the godly." But a more suitable meaning is this: *Say;* that is, hold it to be a settled point; for in Scripture *to say* often means *to think*, and *to be convinced;* as David writes, *I* SAID, *I will take heed to my ways*, (Ps.

xxxix. 1,) and in a thousand instances of the same kind; so that he does not bid them tell the righteous man, but he bids every man be fully convinced, that happy will be the condition of the righteous man, though he may now appear to be unhappy.

Besides, I consider טוב, (*tōb,*) to mean a happy and prosperous condition; as in the former verse he employed the word רעה, (*rāgnāh,*) with which טוב is now contrasted; and thus I do not think that רעה, (*rāgnāh,*) means wickedness, but a miserable condition. Now since it literally runs, *Say to the righteous man,* כי טוב, (*ki tōb,*) *that it shall be well;* either the particle כי, (*ki,*) has an affirmative sense, as in many other passages, or it appears to be superfluous, though the probability is, that it is intended for confirmation. *Surely it shall be well with the righteous man;* that is, let every ground of doubt be removed, and let us be fully convinced, that the condition of the righteous man will be most excellent and prosperous. It is difficult to believe this, and therefore it is added, *he shall eat the fruit of his doings;* that is, he shall not be defrauded of the reward of his good conduct. Others consider *to say* as meaning *to exhort,* and render the two words, כי טוב, (*ki tōb,*) *that he will do well;* but I reject it as a forced interpretation.

11. *Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him.* He brings forward this clause as a contrast to the former one; from which it may be easily inferred what was the design of the Prophet, namely, to comfort the godly, and to terrify the wicked by the judgment of God. For when an uncommonly severe calamity occurs, which attacks all without discrimination, we doubt whether it be by the providence of God, or, on the contrary, by blind chance, that the world is governed. On this account godly men fear and dread that the same destruction which overtakes the wicked will ruin them also. Others think that it is of no importance whether a man be good or bad, when they see both classes visited by pestilence, war, famine, and other calamities. And hence arises the wicked thought, that there is no difference between the rewards of the good and of the bad; and in the midst of these gloomy thoughts carnal appetites lead many to despair.

Accordingly, the Prophet shows that the judgment of God is right, that men may continue to fear God, and may be aware that those who, in the expectation of escaping punishment, provoke God, will not pass unpunished. He likewise exhorts them to ascribe to God the praise of justice; as if he had said, "Think not that blind chance rules in the world, or that God punishes with blind violence, and without any regard to justice, but hold it as a principle fully settled in your minds, that *it shall be well with the righteous man;* for God will repay him what he hath promised, and will not disappoint him of his hope. On the other hand, believe that the condition of the wicked man will be most wretched, for he brings on himself the evil which must at length fall on his head."

By these words the Prophet, at the same time, charges the people with stupidity in not perceiving the judgment of God; for they suffered the punishments of their crimes, and yet hardened themselves under them, as if they had been altogether devoid of feeling. Now there cannot befall us anything worse than that we should be hardened against chastisements, and not perceive that God chastiseth us. When we labour under such stupidity, our case is almost hopeless.

12. *The oppressors of my people are children.*[1] Here also is reproved the madness and sottishness of the people, because they shut their eyes at noon-day. There is nothing which men are more reluctant to allow than to have a yoke laid on them; nor do they willingly submit to be governed by nobles. Feeble and cowardly, therefore, must be the minds of those who obey delicate and effeminate men, and permit themselves to be oppressed by them; nor can it be doubted that God has struck with a spirit of cowardice those who offer their shoulders, like asses, to bear burdens. The power of a tyrant must indeed be endured, even by men of courage; but the reproach which Isaiah brings against the Jews is, that while they obstinately shake off the yoke of God, they are ready to yield abject submission to men, and to perform any services, however shameful or degrading.

[1] *As for my people, children are their oppressors.*—Eng. Ver.

For the Jews could not complain that they were compelled by violence, when of their own accord they obeyed those whose authority they would gladly have declined. Hence it is evident that they were struck by the hand of God, and were shaken with terror, so that they had no strength either of body or of mind.

This is also the vengeance which God had formerly threatened by Moses; for the general doctrine of Moses, as we have already said, is continually alluded to by the prophets.[1] For how was it possible that men who had the power of resistance should of their own accord undergo a slavery from which they would willingly have escaped, had not God deprived them of understanding and forethought, that he might in this manner take vengeance on their crimes? Whenever, therefore, anything of this kind shall befall us, let us not imagine that it came by chance. On the contrary, whenever it shall happen that we are governed by men who are of no estimation, and who are more insignificant than children, let us acknowledge the wrath of the Lord, if we do not choose that the Prophet shall charge us with the grossest stupidity.

They who govern thee.[2] He continues to teach the same doctrine, that when God lets loose the reins against the wicked, so as to disturb everything, he shows that he is highly offended at the Jews; for if they had enjoyed his favour, there was reason to hope that his government would be most holy and blessed. At the same time it is probable that the common herd of men were so foolishly devoted to their rulers, that they revered as oracles both their injunctions and their conduct; and hence arose all the corruption that everywhere prevailed. Since, therefore, the contagion was spreading farther without being perceived by the people, Isaiah cries aloud that they ought to guard against the governors themselves, who corrupt and destroy the people.

[1] Our author appears to have particularly in his eye, Lev. xxvi. 36, *And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.—Ed.*

[2] *They which lead thee.*—(Eng. Ver.) The marginal reading is, *they which call thee blessed.—Ed.*

Others explain it, *they who bless thee;* but as the participle which he employs may be taken from ישר, (*yāshăr,*) which signifies *to rule,* I shall rather adopt that interpretation, for it is more agreeable to the context.[1] I do acknowledge that the false prophets flattered the people, but I see no reason why their flatteries should be mentioned here. But it applies very well to the rulers and heads, that they were the cause of the destruction; for as princes are raised to their office for the sake of the public safety, so no plague is more destructive than when they are bad men, and rule according to their own caprice. He says, therefore, that they who rule are the causes of the evils, and that they corrupt everything, since it was their duty to correct other men, and to point out the way by their own example.

13. *Jehovah standeth up to plead.* So long as wickedness rages without control, and the Lord sends no relief from on high, we think that he is idle and has forgotten his duty. More especially, when the nobles themselves are spared, he appears to grant them liberty to commit sin, as if they were most sacred persons that must not be touched. Accordingly, after having complained of the princes, he adds that the Lord will do what his authority demands, and will not permit such flagrant crimes to pass unpunished. For there is hardly any conduct more offensive, or more fitted to disturb our minds, than when the worst examples of every sort are publicly exhibited by magistrates, while no man utters a syllable against them, but almost all give their approbation. We then ask, Where is God, whose glory, a great part of which, consisting in authority, is taken away, ought to have been illustriously displayed by men of that rank?

Isaiah meets this difficulty by saying, "Though the nation is wicked, yet because the princes themselves are very greatly corrupted, and even pollute the whole nation by their vices, God sits as judge in heaven, and will at length call them to

[1] The reading of the Septuagint is, *οἱ μακαρίζοντες ὑμᾶς, they who bless you.* Undoubtedly מאשרים comes from אשר, and not from ישר, which in the corresponding participle gives מישרים. From the Kal of אשר, *to go,* the Pihel, taking a Hiphil meaning, denotes *to cause to go,* or *to lead.* Not improbably our Author meant that the one verb borrows one of its meanings from the other; but this would need proof.—*Ed.*

account, and assign to every one his reward." Although he does not exempt the multitude from guilt, yet that the sources of the evils may be known, he particularly attacks the rulers, and threatens them with the punishment which they deserved.

14. *The* LORD *will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people.* Formerly he had erected for God a throne from which he might plead. Now he says that he *will enter into judgment.* How? *with the ancients.* There might have been a slight allusion to lawful assemblies, in which older men sit as God's deputies; but I assent to the opinion more commonly entertained, that God contends against *the ancients* of his people. This passage, therefore, corresponds to the saying of David, *God will stand in the assembly of the gods,* (Ps. lxxxii. 1;[1]) that is, though it may now be thought that princes do everything with impunity, and though there be no one to restrain their caprice and their lawless passions, yet one day they will feel that God is above them, and will render an account to him of all their actions.

These reproofs, undoubtedly, the judges of that time were very unwilling to hear. They have no wish, and do not think that it is right, that any one should treat them with such sharpness and severity; for they wish that everything should be at their disposal, that their will should be held as a law, and that they should be allowed to do whatever they choose; that all men ought to flatter and applaud them, and to approve of their very worst actions. They think that no man is a judge of their actions, and do not yield subjection to God himself. Since, therefore, they are so unbridled that they neither endure any advices nor any threatenings, the Prophet summons them to the judgment-seat of God.

And with their princes. They are honourably described, by way of acknowledgment, as the chosen *princes* of the people. This also deserves attention; for they thought that, on account of their rank, they enjoyed a kind of privilege which set them free from the restraints of law, and that though heathen kings and princes might give an account of

[1] Like some other quotations of our Author, this is made from memory, and is not quite accurate.—*Ed.*

their actions, they, on the contrary, were sacred persons. They thought, therefore, that they were beyond the reach of all reproof, and ought not to be addressed, like heathen men, by threats and terrors. On this account Isaiah expressly declares, that the Lord will not only call to account every kind of princes, but especially the proud hypocrites to whose care he had committed his people.

And you have destroyed the vineyard.[1] The metaphor of a vine is very common, where a nation, and especially the nation of Israel, is the subject. (Ps. lxxx. 8; Jer. ii. 21.) And by this word the Prophet now shows their crime to be double, because they paid no more regard to the people whom God had loved with extraordinary affection than if they had ruled over a heathen nation. The pronoun *you* is likewise emphatic; for he addresses the vine-dressers themselves, who, instead of devoting themselves, as they ought to have done, to the cultivation of the vine, devoured it like wild beasts. Accordingly, he represents this to be a great aggravation of their cruelty; for how treacherous was it to *destroy* what they ought to have preserved and protected? By this comparison the Lord shows how great care he takes of his own people, and how warmly he loves them; not only because the Church is called his *vine* and inheritance, but by declaring that he will not endure the treachery and wickedness of those who have ruled over it tyrannically.

The spoil of the poor is in your houses. He adds one circumstance, by which the other parts of their life might be known, that they had in their houses *the prey and spoil of the poor.* Now the palace of princes ought to resemble a sanctuary: for they occupy the dwelling-place of God, which ought to be sacred to all. It is, therefore, the grossest sacrilege to turn a sanctuary into a den of thieves. He represents still more strongly their criminality by adding *of the poor;* for it is the most wicked of all acts of cruelty to plunder a

[1] *Ye have consumed my vineyard.—Lowth. Ye have eaten bare my vineyard.—Stock.* Ὑμεῖς δὲ τί ἐνεπυρίσατε τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου; *And why did you burn up my vineyard?—Sept.* "בער, (bāgnăr,) in its usual acceptation of *burning*, does not agree with the sense of a passage, which represents people making a profit of what they consume. Understand it, therefore, of *clearing away* the productions of the soil, as cattle do when they eat down the grass."—*Rosenmüller.*

poor and needy man, who cannot defend himself, and who ought rather to have been protected.

15. *What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces?* He mentions also other particulars, from which it is evident that they ruled in a haughty, cruel, and oppressive manner. It was not necessary that the Prophet should describe minutely everything deserving reproof in the princes; for from these few circumstances it is evident with what injustice and cruelty and tyranny they ruled. But to whom shall the poor betake themselves but to the magistrate, who ought to be the father of his country and the protector of the wretched? On this account he employs a vehement interrogation, *What?* as if he had said, "What effrontery is this! What cruelty and barbarity, to abuse the mean condition of the poor, so as to have no compassion on them!" By two comparisons he describes their cruel oppression mingled with pride.

Saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts. That the reproof may have all the weight that it ought to have, he brings forward God as speaking; for there is an implied contrast that these things should not be viewed as coming from the mouth of men, but that the accusation proceeds from God himself, and that he pursues those who are guilty of such injustice, and will at length take vengeance on them. Because those who have been exalted to any kind of honour conduct themselves so haughtily as to disdain every direction and advice, he therefore meets their pride by bringing forward the majesty of God, that they may not venture to despise his earnest and severe threatenings. Yet let us remember that this passage ought not to be understood as if the Prophet were speaking only about the mercy of God; for after having threatened vengeance indiscriminately on all, he particularly mentions those who are their heads, in order to show that no man can escape the arm of God: and here he employs what is called the argument from the greater to the less. "How would the Lord spare the lowest of the people, when he punishes even the princes themselves, because they have *destroyed the vineyard?*"

16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty.* Next follows another threatening against the ambition, luxury,

and pride of women. On these points the Prophet has not followed an exact order, but reproves sometimes one vice and sometimes another, as the subject appears to require, and afterwards sums up what he had said in a few words, as he did in the seventh verse of the first chapter. He therefore pronounces censure on gorgeous robes and superfluous ornaments, which were undoubted proofs of vain ostentation. Wherever dress and splendour are carried to excess, there is evidence of ambition, and many vices are usually connected with it; for whence comes luxury in men and women but from pride?

And walk with stretched-forth neck. First, then, he justly declares pride to be the source of the evil, and points it out by the sign, that is, by their gait; that the women *walk with stretched-forth neck.* For as it is a sign of modesty to have a down-cast look, (as even heathen writers have declared,) so to have excessively high looks is a sign of insolence; and when a woman lifts up her head it can betoken nothing but pride. The Prophet certainly acts wisely in beginning at the very fountain; for if he had begun by mentioning signs, such as dress, gait, and matters of that sort, it might have been easy to reply that still the mind was pure and upright; and that if their dress was somewhat too elegant and splendid, that was not a sufficient reason for approaching them with such bitter language, and summoning them to the judgment-seat of God. Accordingly, in order to meet their unfounded accusations, he lays open the inward disease, which is manifested in the whole of their outward dress.

And wandering eyes.[1] What he adds about *wandering eyes* denotes shameless lust, which for the most part is expressed by the *eyes;* for unchaste *eyes* are the heralds of an unchaste heart; but the *eyes* of chaste women are sedate, and not wandering or unsteady.

[1] *Wanton eyes.* Heb. *Deceiving with their eyes.* Eng. Ver. "*Leering with their eyes—Nictitantes oculis:* from סקר, Chald., *oculis vagari.* This is Abarbanel's interpretation, approved of by Parkhurst and Rosenmüller. Bishop Lowth derives מְשַׂקְּרוֹת from שׁקר, *to falsify,* and translates it, *falsely setting off their eyes with paint,* according to the eastern fashion of tinging the eyelids, on the inside, black with stibium, called by the natives *al-cahol.* But the object of the poet in this place is to describe, not ornaments, but affected motions of the body."—*Bishop Stock.*

And make a tinkling with their feet. This is a part of the indecent gesture by which wantonness is discovered. But it is not easy to say whether the women wore on their sandals some *tinkling* ornaments which made a noise as they walked, or whether they imitated the dancing-women by a measured step; for the form of dresses since that time has been greatly changed. Yet I readily adopt the interpretation that they made a noise in walking, for this is very plainly expressed by the word employed.

17. *Therefore will the Lord make bald*[1] *the crown of the head.* Here the particle ו, (*vau*,) which signifies *and*, is put for *therefore;* for he threatens that, since neither gentle advices nor any words can reform them, the Lord will deal with them in a very different manner, and will not only employ sharp and severe language, but will advance in dreadful array, with an armed band, to take vengeance. Accordingly, as they had manifested their obstinacy from *head* to foot, so he declares that the Lord will exhibit the marks of his vengeance in every part of their body. He therefore begins with *the head*, where ornament is chiefly bestowed, and afterwards takes notice of the other parts.

It is worthy of notice that the Prophet had good reason for reproving, with so great earnestness and vehemence, the luxury of women; for while they are chargeable with many vices, they are most of all inflamed with mad eagerness to have fine clothes. Covetous as they naturally are, still they spare no expense for dressing in a showy manner, and even use spare diet, and deprive themselves of what nature requires, that their clothes may be more costly and elegant. So grievously are they corrupted by this vice, that it goes beyond every other.

History tells us what vast crowds the women brought together on account of the Oppian Law,[2] which some wished

[1] *Smite with a scab.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "The Oppian Law," so called from the tribune, Caius *Oppius*, who proposed it, was enacted during the disastrous wars with Hannibal, about 213 years before the Christian era. It was to this effect, "That no woman should wear on her person more than half an ounce of gold, or use garments of variegated colours, or ride in a carriage in any city or town, or within a mile's distance of one, unless when she was going to observe the public

to maintain, and others to repeal; and that transaction was not conducted with any gravity or moderation in consequence of the crowds of women. But we need not go far to find examples; for they are innumerable in almost every nation, and it is a vice which has been very common in every age. As we are dexterous and sharp-sighted in contriving apologies for defending our luxury and extravagance, the Prophet, on that account, has pointed his finger at the source of all the evils, namely, that mad ambition by which men are hurried along to obtain public notice, and to arrive at eminence above others; for, in order that they may be better known, they wish to outshine their neighbours by the elegance of their dress, that they may draw the eyes of others upon them.

Having pointed to the source of the evil, the Prophet descends to many particulars for the purpose of bringing to public view the fooleries of women, and enumerates a long catalogue of them, to show that, in gathering them together, nothing can exceed the curiosity which dwells in woman. Indeed there is no end to those contrivances; and it was not without reason that the ancients called the collection of a woman's ornaments *a world;*[1] for if they were collected into one heap, they would be almost as numerous as the parts of the world. On this account the Prophet appears to search

festivals." This law, though extorted by the hard necessities of the state, was all along regarded by many persons as harsh and tyrannical, and, after producing extraordinary commotions, was overwhelmed by the tide of public opinion. Livy informs us (xxxiv. 1) that "ladies, not restrained either by modesty or by the authority of their husbands," and neglecting the privacy which belonged to the customs of that age, assembled in a tumultuous manner, and publicly solicited the votes of the consuls and praetors, and other persons in office, for the repeal of the law. Ultimately their chief opponent was Cato, who spoke with all his ability and eloquence, but with a sternness peculiar to his character, and increased by the nature of the question under discussion. He was overmatched by the tact and resources of Valerius, who brought to his aid a considerable amount of historical information, placed the popular arguments in an advantageous light, and succeeded in obtaining an almost unanimous repeal of the law, when it had been twenty years in force. Our Author immediately afterwards refers to the arguments employed on that occasion.—*Ed.*

[1] In the speech already mentioned, Valerius wittily alludes to this antiquated use of the Latin word *mundus*, (*a world.*) "Our ancestors," he says, "gave to it the appellation of *a woman's world.*" *Hunc mundum muliebrem appellârunt majores nostri.—Ed.*

the women's chests, and to bring into public view the gaudy trifles which they have treasured up in them, that their extravagant delight and boasting of these things may render their idleness and folly more evident to all. There is no superfluity, therefore, in this enumeration, though spread out in many words, by which their lawless desires are proved to be insatiable.

As to the particulars, I shall not stay to explain them, especially as the best Hebrew scholars have doubts about some of them, and cannot distinguish with certainty the forms of those ornaments. It is enough if we understand the general import and design of the Prophet; namely, that he heaps up and enumerates these trifles in order that the prodigious variety of them may disclose their luxury and ambition, so as to leave them without any excuse. It would be the height of impudence to allege that the contrivances made by the childish vanity of women, beyond what nature requires, are necessary for protecting the body. How many things are here enumerated which are not demanded by nature or necessity or propriety! What is the use of chains, bracelets, ear-rings, and other things of the same sort? Hence it is plain enough that a superfluous collection of such ornaments admits of no excuse; that it gives evidence of excessive luxury which ought to be suppressed or restrained; and that frequently they are unchaste contrivances for weakening the mind and exciting lust. We need not wonder, therefore, that the Prophet speaks so sharply, and threatens severe punishments, against this vice.

24. *Instead of a sweet smell there shall be stink.* It is evident that the country here described abounds in aromatic herbs; and there is no reason to doubt that in pleasant smells, as well as in other matters, they were luxurious. We see that those nations which are farthest removed from the east are not prevented either by distance or by expense from indulging in that kind of luxury. What may be expected to happen in those places where they are abundant? That they will excite lust and promote luxury is beyond all doubt. He means, therefore, that ointments and *sweet smells* were abused by them in a variety of ways; for the sinful

desires of men are ingenious in their contrivances, and can never be satisfied.

Instead of a girdle a rent. Others have rendered it *a falling off*, because the Lord will ungird them. He intends to contrast things which are exceedingly opposite to each other; that as the women formerly were most carefully girt and adorned when they walked, they shall henceforth be torn and naked. He likewise contrasts *baldness* with *curls;* because they arranged their hair not in a modest but an extravagant fashion. Again, *a belt* is contrasted with *sackcloth.* Whether it was *a belt,* or some other kind of *binding,* it is certain that the Prophet meant *a girdle,* which was held in high estimation. Again, *burning* is contrasted with *beauty;* because fashionable ladies hardly venture to expose themselves to the sun's rays, for fear of being sun-burned; and he tells us that this will happen to them. In short, both men and women are instructed to make a sober use of the gifts of God, both in food and in clothing, and in the whole conduct of life. For the Lord cannot endure extravagance, and absolutely must inflict severe punishment on account of it; for it cannot be restrained by a lighter chastisement.

25. *Thy men shall fall by the sword.* He directs his discourse to Jerusalem and to the whole kingdom of Judah; for, after having demonstrated that the whole body is infected with a plague, and that no part of it is free from disease, and after having not even spared the women, he returns to the general doctrine. It would be improper that more than one husband should be assigned to one woman. Besides, what immediately follows applies exclusively to this nation. He particularly describes the punishment, that God will bring down by wars the whole strength of the people.

26. *Her gates shall mourn and lament.* Hence arises *the mourning of the gates,* which, he threatens, will take place when they have met with their calamities; for he means, that where there were great crowds and multitudes, nothing but a dismal solitude will be found. We know that at that time public meetings were held at the gates; and, therefore, as *the gates* sometimes rejoice at the multitude of citizens,

so they are said to *mourn* on account of their frightful desolation. And yet I do not deny that he compares Jerusalem to a woman who is sad, and who bewails her widowhood; for it was customary with mourners *to sit on the ground*, as that nation was in the habit of using ceremonies and outward signs to a greater degree than would be consistent with our customs. But the sum of the matter is, that the city will have lost her inhabitants.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

2. In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

3. And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* every one *that is* written among the living in Jerusalem:

4. When the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

5. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence.

6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

1. Apprehendent itaque in die illa septenæ mulieres viros singulos, dicentes, Pane nostro vescemur, vestimentis nostris induemur, tantùm invocetur nomen tuum super nos, (*vel, censeamur tuo nomine,*) tollasque probrum nostrum.

2. In die illa erit germen Iehovæ in pulchritudinem et gloriam; et fructus terræ in præstantiam et decorem; nempe in liberatis Israelis.

3. Et eveniet ut qui reliquus fuerit in Sion, et residuus manserit in Ierusalem, sanctus vocetur, omnesque Ierosolymis inter vivos (*vel, ad vitam,*) asscripti erunt;

4. Cùm scilicet Dominus eluerit sordes filiarum Sion, et sanguines Ierusalem expiaverit è medio ejus, et in Spiritu judicii, et in Spiritu incendii (*vel, ardoris.*)

5. Et creabit Iehova super totam habitationem montis Sion, et super omnem cœtum ejus, nubem et obscuritatem interdiu; noctu verò splendorem ignis flammantis; quia super omnem gloriam erit protectio.

6. Eritque obumbratio per diem in umbram ab æstu, in refugium et latibulum a nimbo et imbre.

1. *In that day shall seven women take hold of one man.* He pursues the same subject, and unquestionably this dis-

course is immediately connected with what goes before. This verse certainly ought not to have been separated from the preceding. By this circumstance he describes more fully the nature of that desolation and calamity which he had formerly threatened against the Jews; for hypocrites, unless the threatening be conceived in strong terms, either disregard or palliate warnings, so that God's severity never produces its proper effect upon them. From the effect, therefore, he describes the appalling nature of the approaching calamity, that they may not indulge the hope of making an easy escape. As if he had said, "Do not imagine that it will be of moderate extent, lessening your numbers in a small degree; for utter destruction awaits you, so that hardly *one man* will be found for *seven women.*"

The phrase *take hold of* conveys the same meaning. It is, no doubt, inconsistent with the modesty of the sex that a woman should, of her own accord, offer herself to a man. But the Prophet says, that not only will they do this, but that *seven women* will, as it were, lay hands on a man, and keep hold of him; so small will be the number of men. The greatness of the calamity is likewise denoted by what immediately follows: *we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel;* for as it is a duty which belongs to a husband to support his wife and family, the women ask a husband for themselves on unreasonable conditions, when they release him from all concern about supplying them with food. Very great must, therefore, be the scarcity of men, when a great number of women, laying aside modesty, are not only constrained to solicit one man, but do not even shrink from the agreement to procure their own victuals, and request nothing more from a husband than to receive them within the bond of marriage.

Let thy name be called on us. It may be rendered, *Let us be called by thy name;* for when a woman passes into the family of her husband, she is *called by his name,* and loses her own, because the husband is her head. (1 Cor. xi. 3.) Hence the vail is a token of subjection, and Abimelech said to Sarah, *Thy husband Abraham shall be a covering to thy head.* (Gen. xx. 16.) But if she remain unmarried, she is

concealed under the name of her family. That this is the true meaning of that mode of expression is sufficiently evident from what Jacob says when blessing his grandchildren, *Let my name, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, be called on them;* (Gen. xlviii. 16;) that is, "Let them be reckoned as our descendants, and let them be partakers of the covenant, and never excluded from it, as were Esau and Ishmael." In the same manner also do heathen writers speak; as, in Lucan, Marcia, wishing to return to Cato, says: "Grant me only the bare name of marriage; let permission be given that it may be inscribed on my tomb, Marcia the wife of Cato."[1]

And take away our reproach. Their reason for saying so is, that women are sometimes treated with disdain, when they do not obtain husbands, not only because they appear to be despised as unworthy, but because among the ancient people offspring was reckoned an important blessing, and therefore the Prophet says that they will be desirous to wipe away this reproach, and will employ every argument for that purpose. Lastly, he declares that the calamity will be so great, that almost all the men will be carried off.

2. *In that day shall the branch of the* LORD *be for beauty and glory.*[2] This consolation is seasonably added; for the announcement of a dreadful calamity might have alarmed the godly, and led them to doubt as to the stability of God's covenant being maintained amidst the destruction of the people. For there is a wide difference between the two statements, that the people will be *like the sand of the sea,* (Gen. xxii. 17; Is. x. 22,) and yet that they would be cut down by such a frightful massacre, that in the remnant there would be found no dignity, no magnificence, and hardly any name. Isaiah, therefore, according to the custom generally followed by himself and by the prophets, provides against this alarm, and, by adding a consolation,

[1] Da tantum nomen inane
Connubii: liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis
Marcia. Luc. Phars. ii. 342.

[2] *In that day shall the branch of the* LORD *be beautiful and glorious.* —Eng. Ver. The marginal reading is, *beauty and glory.*—*Ed.*

assuages their excessive terror, that believers may still rest assured that the Church will be safe, and may strengthen their hearts by good hope. As he spoke of the restoration of the Church in the second chapter, so he now promises that a new Church will arise, as a *bud* or *shoot* springs up in a field which was formerly uncultivated.

This passage is usually expounded as referring to Christ; and the opinion, plausible in itself, derives additional probability from the words of the prophet Zechariah: *Behold the man whose name shall be The BRANCH.* (Zech. vi. 12.) It is still further strengthened by the consideration, that the Prophet does not barely name this *Branch,* but mentions it with a title expressive of respect, as if he had intended to honour the Divinity of Christ. When he afterwards adds *the fruits of the earth,* they consider this as referring to his human nature. But after a careful examination of the whole, I do not hesitate to regard *the Branch of God* and *the fruit of the earth* as denoting an unusual and abundant supply of grace, which will relieve the hungry; for he speaks as if the earth, barren and exhausted after the desolation, would hold out no promise of future produce, in order that the sudden fertility might render the kindness of God the more desirable; as if the parched and barren fields would yield unexpected herbage.

This metaphor is frequently employed in Scripture, that the gifts of God *spring up* in the world. *Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.* (Ps. lxxxv. 11.) In like manner the Prophet afterwards says: *Let the earth open and bring forth salvation.* (Is. xlv. 8.) These words unquestionably denote a rich supply both of spiritual and of earthly blessings. That such is the meaning of the passage now under consideration is evident from the context; for Isaiah immediately afterwards adds, that it will be *for honour and lustre to the delivered of Israel,*[1] that is, to the number left, whom the Lord will rescue from destruction.

The word פְּלֵיטַת (*phĕlētath*) is commonly translated *escape,*

[1] *Excellent and comely* [Heb. *beauty and glory*] *for them that are escaped of Israel,* [Heb. *for the escaping of Israel.*]—Eng. Ver.

but here, as in many other passages, it is a collective noun, denoting *those who have escaped.* He declares that the elect will enjoy that happy fertility which he had promised, and therefore (ver. 3) that those who shall be left will be *holy.* The meaning of the Prophet is, that the glory of God will be illustriously displayed when a new Church shall arise; as if he would create a people for himself out of nothing, and to enrich it with every kind of blessings.

They who limit it to the person of Christ expose themselves to the ridicule of the Jews, as if it were in consequence of scarcity that they tortured passages of Scripture for their own convenience. But there are other passages of Scripture from which it may be more clearly proved that Christ is true God and true man, so that there is no need of ingenious glosses. Yet I acknowledge that the Prophet speaks here about the kingdom of Christ, on which the restoration of the Church is founded. But it ought to be observed, that the consolation is not addressed indiscriminately to all, but only to the remnant, which has been marvellously rescued from the jaws of death.

Besides, as it might be deemed a cold consolation if he had only said that a small number would be saved, he discourses about the *magnificent glory and dazzling brightness,* to lead believers to hope that this diminution will do no harm; because the excellence of the Church does not consist in multitude but in purity when God bestows splendid and glorious communications of the Spirit of God on his elect. Hence we ought to draw a very useful doctrine, that though believers be exceedingly few, when they are like *brands plucked out of the fire,* (Zech. iii. 2,) yet that God will glorify himself amongst them, and will display in the midst of them a proof of his unspeakable greatness not less illustrious than amidst a large number.

3. *And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion.* He follows out the same statement, that when the pollution of the people shall have been washed away, what remains will be pure and *holy.* The explanation given by some, that they who shall be found written in the book of life will *be called holy,* appears to me to be too limited. These two

clauses ought rather to be read separately, that *all who shall be left in Zion will be holy,* and that *they who shall be left in Jerusalem will be written in the book of life.* And this repetition is very frequent and customary among the Hebrews, when the prophets set forth under various titles the same gift of God. Thus, when it is said, *There shall be salvation in Jerusalem, and forgiveness of sins in Zion,* (Joel ii. 32,) both must be viewed as referring to the same subject; but the grace of God is more fully extolled when the cause of salvation is declared to consist in a free pardon.[1]

In this passage the argument is of the same kind; for he says that, *when the filth shall have been washed away,* the Church will be clean, and that all who shall have a place in her will truly be the elect of God. Now, it is certain that this does not apply universally to the external Church, into which many have been admitted under the designation of believers who have nothing that corresponds to their profession, and who even exceed the small number of good people, as the chaff exceeds the wheat in the barn. And although the captivity in Babylon had been employed by God, as a sieve, to remove a large portion of chaff, yet we know that the Church was still very far from being as pure as she ought to have been. But as at that time there was displayed, in some measure, a resemblance of that purity which will be truly and perfectly manifested after that *the lambs shall have been separated from the kids,* (Matt. xxv. 32,) when Isaiah speaks of those beginnings, he includes, as his custom is, a period extending to the end, when God will bring to perfection that which he then began.

It is the same thing which we see every day going forward; for although chastisements and punishments do not entirely remove all spots from the Church, yet when spots have been washed out, she recovers a part of her purity. Thus she suffers no loss by the strokes inflicted on her; be-

[1] There is a mistake here. In the verse quoted the prophet Joel does not speak of *the forgiveness of sins;* but our Author probably had his eye on the concluding clause, *and in the remnant whom the* LORD *shall call,* as resembling a part of this verse, *and he that shall be left in Jerusalem,* and on this ground adduced it as a *parallel* passage, but was not successful in pointing out where the parallelism lies.—*Ed.*

cause, while she is diminished, she is at the same time comforted by casting out many hypocrites; just as it is only by casting out the offensive or corrupt matter that a diseased body can be restored to health.

Hence we obtain a most useful consolation; for we are wont always to desire a multitude, and to estimate by it the prosperity of the Church. On the contrary, we should rather desire to be few in number, and that in all of us the glory of God may shine brightly. But because our own glory leads us in another direction, the consequence is, that we regard more a great number of men than the excellence of a few.

We ought also to learn what is the true glory of a Church; for she is truly prosperous when the saints have a place in her; though they be few and despised in the world, yet they render her condition prosperous and desirable. But as it will never happen in the world that the saints alone will hold a place in the Church, we ought patiently to endure a mixture, and, in the meantime, we ought to reckon it a most valuable blessing when she makes a near approach to the cleanness which ought to be found in her.

And they shall all be written among the living [or, *to life*] *in Jerusalem.* We have already said that by those who are written in the book of life are meant the elect of God; as if he had said that the profane multitude, which have only a name on the earth, will be cut off. The Prophet alludes to a mode of expression which often occurs in the Scriptures, as when Moses desires that he should be *blotted out of the book* of life, (Ex. xxxii. 32,) rather than that the whole nation should be destroyed. Christ also says to the Apostles, *Rejoice because your names are written in heaven,* (Luke x. 20;) and Ezekiel says, *They shall not be written in the catalogue of my people.*[1] Now, although God has no other book than his eternal counsel, in which he has predestinated us to salvation by adopting us for his children, yet this comparison is exceedingly suitable to our weakness, because in no other way could our mind conceive that God's flock is

[1] He appears to refer to Ezek. xiii. 9, where his version is, *And they shall not be written in the writing,* that is, in the catalogue, *of my people.* —*Ed.*

known to him, so that none of the elect can ever be deprived of eternal life. Since, therefore, God has the names of his people in some manner written down, the decree of adoption, by which their eternal blessedness is secured, is called *the book of life.* The reprobate, though for a time they appear to be on a level with the sons of God, are excluded from this catalogue, as we see that they are cut off when he collects and separates his own people. This matter will not be fully completed before the last day; but as the children of God, by continually persevering, when the reprobate fall off, have their election made sure, it is no small consolation amidst their afflictions, when the temptations by which they are assailed do not cause them to fall from their steadfastness.

4. *When the* LORD *shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion.* He still follows out the same statement; for in consequence of its being generally believed that those calamities by which the Church is diminished inflict upon her grievous injury, the Prophet more zealously inculcates the opposite opinion. And now, for the purpose of refuting that error, he argues, on the contrary, that by this method God *washes away the filth,* and removes the corruptions, of his Church.

The blood of Jerusalem. By *blood* I understand not only murders or other atrocious crimes, but defilements and stains of every description. This metaphor is a reduplication, (ἀναδίπλωσις,) by which he repeats the same thing twice; for, having formerly spoken of pollution in general, he now particularly mentions *blood* as one kind of ceremonial uncleanness. In short, he shows the fruits which spring from God's chastisements. By them our spots are washed away. When abounding iniquity is not punished, we become corrupted along with others; and therefore it is necessary that God should earnestly warn us, and, like a physician, apply physic, and the lancet, and sometimes proceed to *burning.*

By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. Here *judgment* stands for *uprightness* from its effect; that is, when they who had deeply fallen are restored to their former condition. He adds, *the spirit of burning,* by which

the filth must be *burned* and consumed. In this expression there are two things to be observed; first, that the purification of the Church is accomplished by the Spirit; and secondly, that from the effects which he produces the Spirit receives the name, sometimes of *judgment*, and sometimes of *burning;* as if he had said, The *judgment* of the *Spirit*, The *burning* of the *Spirit*. Whenever, therefore, expressions of this sort occur in Scripture, "The Lord will do these things by the Spirit of truth, of power, of righteousness," we may change the expression thus, "by the truth, by the power, by the righteousness, of the Spirit." In this manner doth the Spirit of God work in us, from whom is both the beginning and the end of our salvation From these terms, therefore, we ought to learn what are the chief effects which he produces. By his Spirit the Lord purifies our affections that he may renew and sanctify us. The word *judgment* explains what is of chief importance in the restoration of the Church; that is, when those things which were confused or decayed are restored to good order. *Burning* points out the plan and method by which the Lord restores the Church to her purity.

5. *And Jehovah will create on every dwelling-place of Mount Zion.* As if he had said that "there will not be a corner of Mount Zion on which the grace of God does not shine." *Dwelling-place* and *assembly* I understand to mean the same thing; for *assembly* does not here denote a *congregation*, but the place where men assemble. With the design to express a full blessing, he alludes to what Moses relates, when the Lord delivered the people from Egyptian bondage, and sent *pillars of cloud by day and pillars of fire by night.* (Ex. xiii. 21.) It was customary with the prophets, in describing any remarkable blessing, to remind them of that deliverance from Egypt as an extraordinary work of God; for on that occasion God made a remarkable display of the boundless treasures of his grace in establishing his Church, and left out no proof of his kindness, in order to make known the happiness of that nation. But what chiefly deserved to be commemorated was, that by the covering of *a cloud* by day he protected them from excessive heat, and

that by night *a pillar of fire* went before them, to prevent them from wandering or going astray.

It amounts to this, that when God shall bring back the Church from the captivity in Babylon, the deliverance will be of a kind not less striking and magnificent than when, at an early period, the nation went out of Egypt. Not that during their journey from Babylon to Judea they would be accompanied, as in the wilderness, by a *cloud* and a *pillar of fire*, but that he would display his grace and kindness by other methods not less remarkable. Just as if we were to say at the present day, "God will enlighten us by his Spirit of *fire;* He will give *cloven tongues,* (Acts ii. 3,) to spread his Gospel throughout the whole world." Such expressions ought not to be understood literally, as if the Spirit would be sent down from heaven under that visible sign; but by reminding them of the miracle, it would lead believers to expect that the same power of God, which the Apostles formerly experienced, will now be displayed in restoring the Church. Add to this, that the Prophet, by this mode of expression, points out an uninterrupted continuance of blessing; as if he had said, "Not only will God for a moment stretch out his hand for your deliverance, but as he always accompanied your fathers in the wilderness, so likewise he will deliver and protect you to the end."

For on all the glory shall be a defence. This is connected with what he formerly said, that the *bud* or *branch* which should afterwards spring up would be *for glory.* It is as if he had said, "on all who shall bear the proof and marks of their deliverance." Perhaps also he alludes to the passage in which it is related that the destroying angel passed over the houses which were marked without doing them any injury, (Exod. xii. 23;) for as *the sprinkling of blood* at that time protected and saved them, so Isaiah promises that believers, when God has marked them, will be safe. This must be carefully observed; for we are reminded that we shall not become partakers of the grace of God in any other way than by bearing his image, and by his glory shining in us.

6. *And a covering in the day-time shall be a shadow from the heat.* Though the Prophet confirms what we have already

noticed, that God will be our perpetual guide till he has brought us to the end of our journey, yet we are reminded that believers will always be exposed to numerous calamities. Scorching heat, and piercing cold, and still heavier distresses, press on them severely; when they escape from one danger, they meet with another. But the highest consolation is, that against every inconvenience the *shadow* of the Lord will of itself be sufficient; for it will cover them in such a manner that nothing can injure or do them any harm. Although, therefore, various calamities and afflictions surround us on every side, still the Lord promises that he will assist us; as it is said in the Psalm, *The sun shall not scorch thee by day, nor the moon by night; for the Lord will preserve thee from all evil.* (Ps. cxxi. 6, 7.) Nothing more is necessary than that we follow our calling, and perform our duty faithfully. It belongs equally to the condition of the good and of the bad that they suffer many inconveniencies; but bad men have no refuge, no place of concealment in which they may hide themselves, and they must be utterly overwhelmed. But blessed is the condition of the godly; for although they endure heat and cold, still they have a safe refuge in God. But that glory of which we formerly spoke must shine in us; otherwise we shall have no share in these things; and if we carry about with us God's mark, whenever we shall be assailed by a tempest, let us rest assured that he will be our protection.

CHAPTER V.

1. Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

2. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

3. And now, O inhabitants of Je-

1. Cantabo, agedum, pro dilecto meo, canticum dilecti mei ad vineam suam. Vinea fuit dilecto meo in cornu filio olei.

2. Eam sepiverat, et elapidaverat, et plantaverat, ut vineam electam; turrim ædificaverat in medio ejus, et torcular in ea construxerat. Itaque speravit ut produceret uvas, et producit labruscas.

3. Nunc igitur, habitator Ierusa-

rusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

5. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

6. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

8. Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

9. In mine ears *said* the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, *even* great and fair, without inhabitant.

10. Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

11. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!

12. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

13. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge; and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

14. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and

lem, et vir Iuda, judicate inter me et vineam meam.

4. Quid faciendum fuit amplius vineæ meæ, quod non fecerim ei? Quomodo expectavi ut proferret uvas, et tamen produxit labruscas?

5. Et nunc ostendam, agedum, vobis, quid ego facturus sim vineæ meæ. Auferam sepem ejus, ut sit in depastionem: interrumpam maceriem ejus, ut sit in conculcationem.

6. Faciam ut sit deserta: non putabitur neque fodietur; et ascendet sentis et spina. Quinetiam nubibus præcipiam, ne super eam pluant.

7. Sanè vinea Iehovæ exercituum domus Israel est; et vir Iuda palmes ejus delectabilis. Inde expectavit judicium, et ecce oppressio; justitiam, et ecce clamor.

8. Væ qui conjungunt domum ad domum, agrum ad agrum copulant, donec non sit locus; ut collocemini scilicet vos soli in medio terræ.

9. Hoc in auribus Iehovæ exercituum, Si non domus multæ in solitudinem redigantur, magnæ et pulchræ absque habitatore.

10. Quinetiam decem jugera vineæ facient batum unum, et semen cori reddet ephi.

11. Væ qui manè surgunt ad sectandam ebrietatem, et qui tempus ad noctem extrahunt, dum vinum accendit eos.

12. Et est cythara, lyra, tympanum, tibia, et vinum, in conviviis eorum; opus autem Iehovæ non respiciunt; nec opus manuum ejus considerant.

13. Propterea in captivitatem abiit populus meus; quia non fuit præditus scientia; et gloria ejus, viri famis, et multitudo ejus aruit siti.

14. Propterea dilatavit infernus animam suam, et os suum distendit absque modo descenditque gloria

their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

15. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

16. But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God, *that is* holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness.

17. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

18. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:

19. That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it:* and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it!*

20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21. Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;

23. Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25. Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcases *were* torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss

ejus; et multitudo ejus, et opulentia ejus, et qui lætatus est in ea.

15. Et incurvabitur homo, et humiliabitur vir; oculi inquam sublimium humiliabuntur.

16. Exaltabitur autem Iehova exercituum in judicio, et Deus qui sanctus est sanctificabitur in justitia.

17. Et pascentur agni secundum rationem suam; et desolata pinguium advenæ comedent.

18. Væ trahentibus iniquitatem in funibus vanitatis, et tanquam vinculis plaustri peccatum.

19. Qui dicunt, Acceleret, festinet opus ejus, et videamus; appropinquet ac veniat consilium Sancti Israel, ut sciamus.

20. Væ qui dicunt malo bonum, et bono malum; qui faciunt lucem ex tenebris, et tenebras ex luce; qui vertunt amarum in dulce, et dulce in amarum.

21. Væ sapientibus in oculis suis, et qui coram seipsis sunt prudentes.

22. Væ qui fortes sunt ad libandum vinum, et viris fortibus ad miscendam potionem:

23. Qui justificant impium propter munus; justitiam autem justi tollunt ab eo.

24. Propterea sicut devorat stipulam lingua ignis, et palea a flamma dissolvitur; sic radix eorum quasi putredo erit, et germen eorum quasi pulvis vanescet. Quoniam abjecerunt legem Iehovæ exercituum, et eloquium Sancti Israel aversati sunt.

25. Idcirca exarsit furor Iehovæ in populum suum; et extendens super eum manum suam percussit eum; et contremuerunt montes, fuitque cadaver eorum mutilum projectum in medio viarum; et in omnibus istis non est aversus furor ejus; sed adhuc manus ejus est extenta.

26. Et levabit signum ad gentes e longinquo; sibilabit Genti ab ex-

unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.

27. None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

28. Whose arrows *are* sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.

29. Their roaring *shall be* like a lion, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry *it* away safe, and none shall deliver *it*.

30. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and* sorrow; and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

tremo terræ; et ecce velox et levis veniet.

27. Non erit lassus, neque impingens inter ipsos; nullus dormitabit neque dormiet; non solvetur ulli cingulum lumborum, neque rumpetur corrigia calceamentorum ejus.

28. Sagittæ ipsorum acutæ erunt, et omnes arcus extenti. Ungulæ equorum quasi silex; et rotæ ipsorum quasi turbo reputabuntur.

29. Rugitus ejus sicut leonis; fremet instar leunculorum. Frendet atque apprehendet prædam. Spolia corradet, et nemo eripiet.

30. Fremet super eum in die illo, quasi fremitus maris; tum aspiciet ad terram, et ecce tenebræ tribulationis; et lux obtenebrata erit in cœlis.

1. *Now will I sing to my beloved.* The subject of this chapter is different from that of the former. It was the design of the Prophet to describe the condition of the people of Israel, as it then was, in order that all might perceive their faults, and might thus be led by shame and self-loathing to sincere repentance. Here, as in a mirror, the people might behold the misery of their condition. But for this, they would have flattered themselves too much in their crimes, and would not have patiently listened to any instructions. It was therefore necessary to present a striking and lively picture of their wickedness; and in order that it might have the greater weight, he made use of this preface; for great and memorable events were usually described in verse, that they might be repeated by every one, and that a lasting record of them might be preserved. In like manner, we see that Moses wrote a song, and many other compositions (Ex. xv. 1; Deut. xxxii. 1,) in order that all the events might be proclaimed in this manner, both in public and in private. The instruction becomes more widely diffused than if it had been delivered in plainer language. For the same reason Isaiah composed this song, that he might present to the people a clearer view of their wickedness; and, undoubtedly

he handled this subject with magnificent and harmonious language, for the highest skill is commonly exercised in the composition of poems.

To my beloved. There can be no doubt that he means God; as if he had said that he would compose a poem in behalf of God, that he might expostulate with the people about their ingratitude; for it gave additional weight to his language to represent God as speaking. But a question arises, Why does Isaiah call God his friend? Some reply that he was a kinsman of Christ, and I acknowledge that he was a descendant of David; but this appears to be a forced interpretation. A more natural and appropriate one would be, to adopt the statement of John, that the Church is committed to *the friends of the bridegroom,* (John iii. 29,) and to reckon prophets as belonging to that class. To them, unquestionably, this designation applies; for the ancient people were placed under their charge, that they might be kept under their leader. We need not wonder, therefore, that they were jealous and were greatly offended when the people bestowed their attachment on any other. Isaiah therefore assumes the character of the bridegroom, and, being deeply anxious about the bride entrusted to him, complains that she has broken conjugal fidelity, and deplores her treachery and ingratitude.

Hence we learn that not only Paul, but all those prophets and teachers who faithfully served God, were jealous of God's spouse. (2 Cor. xi. 2.) And all the servants of God ought to be greatly moved and aroused by this appellation; for what does a man reckon more valuable than his wife? A well-disposed husband will value her more highly than all his treasures, and will more readily commit to any person the charge of his wealth than of his wife. He to whom one will entrust his dearly-beloved wife must be reckoned very faithful. Now to pastors and ministers the Lord commits his Church as his beloved wife. How great will be our wickedness if we betray her by sloth and negligence! Whosoever does not labour earnestly to preserve her can on no pretence be excused.

A song of my beloved. By using the word דודי, *dōdi,* he

changes the first syllable, but the meaning is the same as in the former clause. Though some render it *uncle*, and others *cousin*, I rather agree with those who consider it to contain an allusion; for greater liberties are allowed to poets than to other writers. By his arrangement of those words, and by his allusions to them, he intended that the sound and rhythm should aid the memory, and impress the minds, of his readers.

My beloved had a vineyard. The metaphor of *a vineyard* is frequently employed by the prophets, and it would be impossible to find a more appropriate comparison. (Ps. lxxx. 8; Jer. ii. 21.) There are two ways in which it points out how highly the Lord values his Church; for no possession is dearer to a man than *a vineyard*, and there is none that demands more constant and persevering toil. Not only, therefore, does the Lord declare that we are his beloved inheritance, but at the same time points out his care and anxiety about us.

In this *song* the Prophet mentions, first, the benefits which the Lord had bestowed on the Jewish people; secondly, he explains how great was the ingratitude of the people; thirdly, the punishment which must follow; fourthly, he enumerates the vices of the people; for men never acknowledge their vices till they are compelled to do so.

On a hill. He begins by saying that God had placed his people in a favourable situation, as when a person plants a vine on a pleasant and fertile hill. By the word *horn* or *hill* I understand a lofty place rising above a plain, or what we commonly call *a rising-ground*, (*un coustau.*) It is supposed by some to refer to the situation of Jerusalem, but I consider this to be unnatural and forced. It rather belongs to the construction of the Prophet's allegory; and as God was pleased to take this people under his care and protection, he compares this favour *to the planting of a vineyard;* for it is better to plant vines on hills and lofty places than on a plain. In like manner the poet says, *The vine loves the open hills; the yews* [*prefer*] *the north wind and the cold.*[1] The

[1] Denique apertos
Bacchus amat colles: Aquilonem et frigora taxi.
Virg. Georg. II. 112.

Prophet, therefore, having alluded to the ordinary method of planting the vine, next follows out the comparison, that this place occupied no ordinary situation. When he calls it *the son of oil* or *of fatness*,[1] he means a rich and exceedingly fertile spot. This is limited by some commentators to the fertility of Judea, but that does not accord with my views, for the Prophet intended to describe metaphorically the prosperous condition of the people.

2. *And he fenced it.* The incessant care and watchfulness of God in dressing his vine are asserted by the Prophet, as if he had said, that God has neglected nothing that could be expected from the best and most careful householder. And yet we do not choose to attempt, as some commentators have done, an ingenious exposition of every clause, such as, that the Church is *fenced* by the protection of the Holy Spirit, so that it is safe against the attacks of the devil; that the *wine-press* is doctrine; and that by *the stones* are meant the annoyances of errors. The design of the Prophet, as I have mentioned, was more obvious, namely, that by incessant care and large expenditure God has performed the part of an excellent husbandman. Yet it was the duty of the Jews to consider how numerous and diversified were the blessings which God had conferred on them; and at the present day, when the Church is represented under the metaphor of *a vineyard*, we ought to view those figures as denoting God's blessings, by which he makes known not only his love toward us, but likewise his solicitude about our salvation.

In the verb *planted* the order appears to be reversed, for one ought to begin with *planting* rather than with the *fence;* but my explanation is, that after having *planted*, he did everything else that was necessary. Justly, therefore, does he charge them with ingratitude and treachery, when the fruits that ought to have followed such laborious cultivation were not brought forth. There is reason to fear that the Lord will bring the same accusation against us; for the greater the benefits which we have received from God, the more disgraceful will be our ingratitude if we abuse them.

[1] *In a very fruitful hill.*—Eng. Ver.

It is not without a good reason, or to enable them to make any idle display, that the Lord blesses his people; it is, that they may yield *grapes*, that is, the best fruit. If he be disappointed of his expectation, the punishment which the Prophet here describes will follow. The mention of his benefits ought, therefore, to produce a powerful impression on our minds, and to excite us to gratitude.

Besides, the word *vineyard*, and a *vineyard* so carefully cultivated, suggests an implied contrast; for so much the more highly ought we to value the acts of God's kindness, when they are not of an ordinary description, but tokens of his peculiar regard. Other blessings are indiscriminately bestowed, such as, that he *maketh the sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good*, (Matt. v. 45,) and supplies them with what is necessary for food and clothing. But how much more highly ought we to esteem that covenant of grace into which he has entered with us, by which he makes the light of the Gospel to shine on us; for his own people are its peculiar objects! That care and diligence, therefore, which the Lord continually manifests in cultivating our minds deserves our most earnest consideration.

Therefore he hoped that it would bring forth grapes.[1] He now complains that the nation which had enjoyed such high advantages had basely and shamefully degenerated; and he accuses them of undervaluing the kindness of God, for he says that, instead of *pleasant grapes*, they yielded only *wild* and bitter fruits. It is undoubtedly true that God, to whose eyes *all things are naked and opened*, (Heb. iv. 13,) is not deceived by his expectation like a mortal man. In the Song of Moses he plainly declares that he well knew from the beginning what would be the wickedness of his people. *My beloved*, says he, *when she fares well and becomes fat, will kick.* (Deut. xxxii. 15.) It is therefore not more possible that God should be mistaken in his expectations, than that he should repent. Isaiah does not here enter into subtle reasonings about the expectations which God had formed, but describes the manner in which the people ought to have acted, that they might not lose the benefit of such excellent advantages.

[1] *And he looked that it should bring forth grapes.*—Eng. Ver.

Thus God commands that the Gospel be proclaimed *for the obedience of faith,* (Rom. xvi. 26,) not that he expects all to be obedient, but because, by the mere hearing of it, unbelievers are rendered inexcusable. Moreover, there is nothing that ought to excite us more powerfully to lead a devout and holy life, than to find that those duties which we perform towards God are compared by the Holy Spirit to fruits of exquisite flavour.

3. *Now, therefore, O inhabitant of Jerusalem!* Those persons with whom he contends are made judges in their own cause, as is usually done in cases so plain and undoubted that the opposite party has no means of evasion. It is, therefore, a proof of the strongest confidence in his cause, when he bids the guilty persons themselves declare if this be not the true state of the fact; for immediately afterwards we shall find him declaring that the accusation is decided against those persons to whom he now commits the decision.

4. *What more ought to have been done to my vineyard?* He first inquires what could have been expected from the best husbandman or householder, *which he has not done to his vineyard?* Hence he concludes that they had no excuse for having basely withheld from him the fruit of his toil.

How did I expect that it would yield grapes? In this clause he appears to expostulate with himself for having expected any good or pleasant fruit from so wicked a people; just as, when the result does not answer to our expectation, we complain of ourselves, and are angry at having ill-bestowed our labour on ungrateful persons whose wickedness ought to have restrained us from doing what we did, and acknowledge that we are justly deceived, because we were too simple and easily imposed on. But a more natural interpretation will be this: "Since I discharged every part of my duty, and did more than any one could have expected in dressing my *vineyard,* how comes it that it yields me so poor a return, and that, instead of the fruit which was expected, it yields what is absolutely bitter?"

If it be objected that God had the remedy in his hands, if he had turned the hearts of the people, this is an idle evasion as applied to those men; for their conscience holds

them fast, so that they cannot escape by laying the blame on another. Though God do not pierce the hearts of men by the power of his Spirit, so as to render them obedient to him, yet they will have no right to complain that this was wanting; for every pretence of ignorance is fully and abundantly taken away by the outward call. Besides, God does not speak here of his power, but declares that he was not under any obligation to do more than he did.

5. *And now come, I will show you what I will do to my vineyard.* Having held the Jews to be condemned, as it were, by their own mouth, he next adds that he will take vengeance for their contempt of his grace, so that they will not escape from being punished. The reproof would not have been sufficiently powerful to affect their minds, if he had not also threatened punishment; and therefore he now declares that the heinous offence, of having wickedly imposed on him, will not escape vengeance. Now the punishment to be inflicted on them amounts to this, that they will be deprived of the gifts which they had abused, when God shall not only withdraw his care of them, but shall give them up to be plundered by their enemies. At the same time he shows how wretched their condition will be, when God shall have ceased to bestow on them his multiplied favours.

Hence it follows that it must have been owing entirely to the extraordinary goodness of God, that the *vineyard* remained safe and uninjured till that time. He goes so far as to point out the various supports by which it was upheld, and the vast resources which God possesses for destroying it both within and without; for when his protection has been removed, they must become a prey to all that pass by, whether men or beasts. "When the fence has been removed," says he, "the cattle will tread on it and lay it bare, robbers will ransack and plunder it, and thus it will become a wilderness."

6. *I will lay it waste.* God will not take pains to dig and prune it, and consequently it will become barren for want of dressing; *briars and thorns* will spring up to choke its branches; and, what is more, by withholding rain, God will dry up its roots. Hence it is evident how manifold are the

weapons with which God is supplied for punishing our ingratitude, when he sees that we despise his kindness. Isaiah is still, no doubt, proceeding with his metaphor, and, in order to obtain more eager attention, adorns his style by figures of speech. But we ought simply to conclude, that as God continually bestows on us innumerable benefits, so we ought to be earnestly on our guard lest, by withdrawing first one and then another, he punish us for despising them.

So far as relates to the government of the Church, the more numerous the kinds of assistance which she needs, the more numerous are the punishments to which she will be liable, if she wickedly corrupt what was appointed by God for her salvation. Nor ought we to wonder, if at the present day so many distresses threaten ruin and desolation; for whatever calamity befalls us, whether it be that there is a deficiency of instruction, or that the wicked abound, or that foxes and wolves creep into the Church, all this must be ascribed to our ingratitude, because we have not yielded such fruit as we ought, and have been indolent and sluggish. Whenever, therefore, we are justly deprived of those great favours which he freely bestowed on us, let us acknowledge the anger of the Lord.

7. *Truly the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel.* Hitherto he spoke figuratively; now he shows what is the design of this *song.* Formerly he had threatened judgment against the Jews; now he shows that they are not only guilty, but are also held to be convicted persons; for they could not be ignorant of the benefits which they had received from God. *Thou broughtest a vine from Egypt,* says the Psalmist, *and, having driven out the nations, plantedst it.* (Ps. lxxx. 8.) Their ingratitude was plain and manifest.

Isaiah does not illustrate every part of the metaphor; nor was it necessary; for it was enough to point out what was its object. The whole nation was *the vineyard;* the individual men were *the plants.* Thus he accuses the whole body of the nation, and then every individual; so that no man could escape the universal condemnation, as if no part of the expostulation had been addressed to himself. Why the nation is called *a vineyard* is plain enough; for the Lord

chose it, and admitted it to the covenant of grace and of eternal salvation, and bestowed on it innumerable blessings. The *planting* is the commencement, and the dressing of it follows. That nation was adopted, and in various respects was the object of Divine care; for the adoption would have been of no avail, if the Lord had not continually adorned and enriched it by his blessings.

The same doctrine ought to be inculcated on us at the present day. Christ affirms that he is *the vine*, (John xv. 1,) and that, having been ingrafted into this *vine*, we are placed under the care of the Father; for God is pleased to perform towards us the office of a husbandman, and continually bestows those favours which he reproachfully asserts that he had granted to his ancient people. We need not wonder, therefore, if he is greatly enraged when he bestows his labour uselessly and to no purpose. Hence that threatening, *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will cut off, and cast into the fire.* (John xv. 2, 6.)[1]

He looked for judgment. He begins without a metaphor to relate how wickedly the Jews had degenerated, among whom equity and justice was despised, and every kind of injustice and violence abounded. The words contain an elegant play of language, (paronomasia,) for those which have nearly the same sound have an opposite meaning. מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*) denotes *judgment;* מִשְׂפָּח (*mishpach*) denotes *conspiracy* or *oppression;* צְדָקָה (*tzĕdākāh*) denotes *righteousness;* צְעָקָה (*tzĕākāh*) denotes the *cry* and *complaint* of those who are oppressed by violence and injustice; sounds which are not wont to be heard where every man receives what is his own. He mentions two things which the Lord chiefly demands from his people as the genuine fruits of the fear of God; for although piety comes first in order, yet there is no inconsistency in taking the description of it from the duties of the second table. They are justly charged with having despised God, on the ground of having acted cruelly

[1] In our Author's quotation the 2d and 6th verses are inaccurately blended. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he will take away.* (Ver. 2.) *If a man abide not in me, he shall be cast out, and wither as a branch; and men shall gather it, and cast it into the fire, and it shall be burned.* (Ver. 6.) We follow the Author's version.—*Ed.*

towards men; for where cruelty reigns, religion is extinguished.

Let us now understand that the same things are addressed to us; for as that nation was *planted*, so were we. We should call to remembrance what Paul says, that we were like *wild olive-plants*, but that they were the true and natural olive-tree. (Rom. xi. 25.) Since we who were strangers have been ingrafted into the true olive-tree, the Lord has cultivated and adorned us with unceasing care. But what kind of fruits do we bring forth? Assuredly they are not only useless, but even bitter. So much the greater is the ingratitude for which we ought to be condemned, for the blessings which he has bestowed and heaped on us are far more abundant. And justly does this expostulation apply to us, for violence and injustice abound everywhere. But since the general doctrine did not strike their minds so powerfully, the Prophet described chiefly these two kinds of wickedness; that he might point out with the finger, as it were, how far that nation was from the fruit which a good *vineyard* ought to have yielded.

8. *Woe to them that join house to house and field to field.* He now reproves their insatiable avarice and covetousness, from which the acts of cheating, injustice, and violence are wont to arise. For it cannot be condemned as a thing in itself wrong, if a man *add field to field and house to house;* but he looked at the disposition of mind, which cannot at all be satisfied, when it is once inflamed by the desire of gain. Accordingly, he describes the feelings of those who never have enough, and whom no wealth can satisfy. So great is the keenness of covetous men that they desire to have everything possessed by themselves alone, and reckon everything that is obtained by others to be something which they want, and which has been taken from them. Hence the beautiful observation of Chrysostom, that "covetous men, if they could, would willingly take the sun from the poor," for they envy their brethren the common elements, and would gladly swallow them up; not that they might enjoy them, but because such is the madness to which their greed carries them. All the while they do not consider that they need the assist-

ance of others, and that a man left alone can do nothing all their care is to scrape together as much as they can, and thus they swallow up everything by their covetousness.

He therefore accuses covetous and ambitious men of such folly that they would wish to have other men removed from the earth, that they might possess it alone; and consequently they set no limit to their desire of gain. For what madness is it to wish to have those driven away from the earth whom God has placed in it along with us, and to whom, as well as to ourselves, he has assigned it as their abode! Certainly nothing more ruinous could happen to them than to obtain their wish. Were they alone, they could not plough, or reap, or perform other offices indispensable to their subsistence, or supply themselves with the necessaries of life. For God has linked men so closely together, that they need the assistance and labour of each other; and none but a madman would disdain other men as hurtful or useless to him. Ambitious men cannot enjoy their renown but amidst a multitude. How blind are they, therefore, when they wish to drive and chase away others, that they may reign alone!

As to the size of *houses*, the same remark which we formerly made about *fields* will apply; for he points out the ambition of those who are desirous to inhabit spacious and magnificent *houses*. If a man who has a large family makes use of a large *house*, he cannot be blamed for it; but when men, swollen with ambition, make superfluous additions to their houses, only that they may live in greater luxury, and when one person alone occupies a building which might serve for the habitation of many families, this undoubtedly is empty ambition, and ought justly to be blamed. Such persons act as if they had a right to drive out other men and to be the only persons that enjoyed a house or a roof, and as if other men ought to live in the open air, or must go somewhere else to find an abode.

9. *This is in the ears of Jehovah of hosts.* Here something must be supplied; for he means that the Lord sits as judge, and as taking cognizance of those things. When covetous men seize and heap up their wealth, they are blinded by

their desire of gain, and do not understand that they will one day render an account. Never, certainly, were men so utterly stupid as not to ascribe some judgment to God; but they flatter themselves so far as to imagine that God does not observe them. In general, therefore, they acknowledge the judgment of God: when they come to particular cases, they take liberties, and suppose that they are not bound to proceed to that extent.

If many houses be not laid desolate. Having warned them that none of these things escape the eyes of God, lest they should imagine that it is a knowledge which does not lead to action, he immediately adds, that vengeance is close at hand. He likewise makes use of an oath; for the expression *If not* is a form of swearing that frequently occurs in the Scriptures.[1] In order to strike them with greater terror, he breaks off the sentence with studied abruptness.[2] He might indeed have brought out this threatening with full expression, but the incomplete form is better fitted to keep the hearer in doubt and suspense, and is therefore more alarming. Besides, by this instance of reserve the Lord intended to train us to modesty, that we may not be too free in the use of oaths.

But what does he threaten? *Many houses will be laid desolate.* This is a just punishment, by which the Lord chastises the covetousness and ambition of men, who did not consider their own meanness, that they might be satisfied with a moderate portion. In a similar manner the poet ridicules the mad ambition of Alexander the Great, who, having learned from the philosophy of Anacharsis that there were many worlds, sighed to think, that after having worn himself out by so many toils, he had not yet made himself master of one world. "One globe does not satisfy the Macedonian youth. He writhes in misery on account of the narrow limits of the world, as if he were confined to the rocks

[1] The following is a striking instance: *To whom I sware in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest;* that is, *they shall not enter into my rest.* (Ps. xcv. 11.)—*Ed.*

[2] The classical reader may be reminded of a fine instance of ἀποσιώπησις, by which the effect of a speech is prodigiously heightened:—

Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.—*Virg. Æn.* i. 135.

of Gyaros, or to the puny Seriphos. But when he shall enter the city framed by potters, he will be content with a tomb. Death alone acknowledges how small are the dimensions of the bodies of men."[1]

Instances of the same kind occur every day, yet we do not observe them; for the Lord exhibits to us, as in a mirror, the absurd vanity of men, who spend a vast amount of money in building palaces that are afterwards to become the receptacles of owls and bats and other animals. These things are plainly before our eyes, and yet we do not apply our mind to the consideration of them. So sudden and various are the changes that happen, so many houses are laid desolate, so many cities are overthrown and destroyed, and, in short, there are so many other evident proofs of the judgment of God; and yet men cannot be persuaded to lay aside this mad ambition. The Lord threatens by the Prophet Amos: *You have built houses of hewn stones, but you shall not dwell in them.* (Amos v. 11.) And again, *He will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.* (Amos vi. 11.) These things happen daily, and yet the lawless passions of men are not abated.

10. *Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath.* He foretells that the same thing will befall their fields and vineyards; that covetous men will not obtain the desired returns, because their greed is insatiable; that, like certain animals which, by their breath, scorch the branches, and wither the corn, those men destroy the fruits of the earth by their extortion. The fields will be so barren as scarcely to yield a tenth part of the seed: the vineyards will yield very little wine.

A *bath*, as Josephus tells us, is a measure of liquids, and contains seventy-two sextaries; a very small measure, certainly, for ten acres, especially on a fertile soil. The *cor* (κόρος) or *homer*, is a measure of dry substances, and, accord-

[1] Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis:
Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi,
Ut Gyari clausus scopulis parvaque Seripho:
Quum tamen a figulis munitam intraverit urbem,
Sarcophago contentus erit. Mors sola fatetur,
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.
Juven. Sat. x. 168-173.

ing to the same author, contains thirty-one *medimni*.[1] An *ephah* is the tenth part of it, and therefore evidently contains a little more than three *medimni*.[2]

Now, when the soil is productive, it yields not only tenfold, but thirtyfold, and in all cases goes beyond the quantity of seed, and gives back far more abundantly than it received. When the case is otherwise, it undoubtedly proceeds from the curse of God punishing the extortion of men. And yet men blame the niggardliness of the soil, as if the fault lay there, but all in vain; for we would not want abundant increase, if God did not curse the soil on account of men's covetousness. When they are so eagerly employed in gathering and heaping up, what else are they doing than swallowing up the goodness of God by their greed? If this is not seen in all, because they want the power, still they do not want the disposition. Never was the world so much inflamed by this covetousness, and we need not wonder if God visit it with punishment.

11. *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink.* The Prophet does not aim at an enumeration of all the vices which then prevailed, but only points out some particular kinds of them, to which they were peculiarly addicted. After having handled the general doctrine, he found it necessary to come to particular vices; and the enumeration of those was more urgently needed, for there would have been no end of going through them all one by one. Having reproved covetousness, he now attacks drunkenness, which undoubtedly was also a prevailing vice; for

[1] A *medimnus*, or Greek bushel, is reckoned to contain six Roman bushels, a Roman bushel (*modius*) being about an English peck.—*Ed.*

[2] "For the actual size of these measures," says Dr. Kitto, "we must refer to Josephus, of whom Theodoret (*in Exod.* xxix.) says: πιστευτέον δὲ ἐν τούτοις τῷ Ἰωσήπῳ ἀκριβῶς τοῦ ἔθνους τὰ μέτρα ἐπισταμένῳ,—'follow in these things Josephus, who well understood the measures of the nation.' (Comp. *Antiq.* viii. 3, 8.) To the *homer* or *cor* Josephus ascribes (*Antiq.* xv. 9, 2) twelve Attic medimni, where the reading should be metretae. Bath and Ephah are the same. Josephus (*Antiq.* viii. 2, 9) determines each at seventy-two xestae, and makes them equal to an Attic metretes. The Attic metretes, which corresponded with the Hebrew bath and ephah, contains 739,800 Parisian grains of rain-water, which would fill a space of about 1985 Parisian cubic inches."—*Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, Art. *Weights and Measures.*

the kinds of vices which he selects are not those which were found in one person or another, but those which universally prevailed ; and indeed the vices are of such a kind as infect the whole body by their contagion.

To *rise early* means to be earnestly employed in doing anything ; as when Solomon says, *Woe to the nation whose princes eat in the morning,* (Eccl. x. 16 ;) that is, whose chief care is to fill their belly and enjoy delicacies. This is contrary to the order of nature ; for *man,* as David says, *riseth that he may go to his work, and may be engaged in business till the evening.* (Ps. civ. 23.) Now, if he lay aside his labours, and rise to partake of luxuries, and to follow drunkenness, this is monstrous. He adds—

And who continue till night. The meaning is, that from the dawn of the morning to the twilight of the evening they continue their drunken carousals, and are never weary of drinking. Abundance and luxury are closely joined together ; for when men enjoy abundance, they become luxurious, and abuse it by intemperance.

12. *And the harp.* He adds the instruments of pleasures by which men addicted to intemperance provoke their appetite. These might be different from ours, but they belonged to music. Now, Isaiah does not blame music, for it is a science which ought not to be despised ; but he describes a nation swimming in every kind of luxury, and too much disposed to indulge in pleasures. This is sufficiently evident from what follows.

And they regard not the work of the Lord. As if he had said, " They are as constant in luxurious indulgence, and as much devoted to it, as if this had been the purpose for which they were born and reared ; and they do not *consider* why the Lord supplies them with what is necessary." Men were not born to eat and drink, and wallow in luxury, but to obey God, to worship him devoutly, to acknowledge his goodness, and to endeavour to do what is pleasing in his sight. But when they give themselves up to luxury, when they dance, and sing, and have no other object in view than to spend their life in the highest mirth, they are worse than beasts : for they do not *consider* for what end God created them, in

what manner he governs this world by his providence, and to what end all the actions of our life ought to be directed.

Having stated this meaning, which appears to me to be natural, I consider nothing more to be necessary; for I cannot adopt the ingenious expositions of some authors, such as, when they explain the *work* of God to mean *the law;* nor did I intend to state every opinion which others have maintained. It is enough to know that all who are addicted to gormandizing are here subjected by the Prophet to the reproach of voluntarily becoming like brute beasts, when they do not direct their minds to God, who is the author of life.

13. *Therefore my people are gone into captivity.* I do not approve of the interpretation given by some commentators, that in consequence of the teachers having failed to perform their duty, the people, through ignorance and error, fell into many vices, which at length became the cause of their destruction. On the contrary, he charges them with gross and voluntary ignorance, as if he had said that, by their madness, they brought down destruction on themselves. The meaning therefore is, that the people perished because they despised instruction; whereas they might have been preserved if they had listened to good counsels: and therefore he expressly says, *My people;* that is, the nation which enjoyed the extraordinary privilege of being separated from the rest of the nations, that by relying on the guidance and direction of God, they might have a fixed rule of life. Thus it is said, *What nation is so eminent and so distinguished as to have gods nigh to it, as thy God draws near to thee this day? This shall therefore be your knowledge and understanding above all nations, to hear your God.* (Deut. iv. 6, 7.)

This baseness heightens the criminality of the people, that they shut their eyes in the midst of so much light. It was therefore a very severe accusation, that a people which God had undertaken to govern possessed *no knowledge:* for the law might have given them abundant direction for the whole conduct of life; it was a light shining before them amidst the general darkness of the world; and therefore it was monstrous that the nation should refuse to follow that path

which had been pointed out to them, and, on the contrary, should shut their eyes, and rush forward to destruction.

Have gone into captivity. Some consider the word *captivity* to be used here in a metaphorical sense; but this is a forced interpretation; for the Prophet here describes the punishments which God had in part inflicted, and in part intended to inflict, so as to make it evident that the people were wretched through their own fault, as if they wished to draw down upon themselves the curses of God. When this discourse was delivered, some tribes of Israel had already been banished, and the destruction of both kingdoms was at hand. The Prophet accordingly speaks as if all had already been led *into captivity.*

And their glory are men famished,[1] *and their multitude are dried up with thirst.* He now adds another punishment, namely, that they are wasted with hunger and famine, and not only common men, but some persons of the highest rank, in whom the vengeance of God is more clearly seen; for it was shocking to see wealthy men and nobles, on whom the respectability of the whole nation rested, wandering about and famished. And yet the severity of God's vengeance did not exceed proper bounds; for we must always take into account that ignorance was the cause; that is, the Jews were rebellious, and obstinately rejected the light of heavenly doctrine; yea, shut their ears against God when he was willing to perform the part of a master in instructing them. Hence we draw a useful doctrine; namely, that the source of all our calamities is, that we do not allow ourselves to be taught by the word of God, and this is what the Prophet chiefly intended that we should observe.

It may be asked, Is ignorance the cause of all calamities? Many persons appear to sin not so much through ignorance as through obstinacy; for they see what is right, but refuse to follow it, and the consequence is that they sin willingly, and not merely through inadvertency. I answer, ignorance is sometimes the *near*, and sometimes the *remote* cause; or, to use the common expressions, the one is *immediate*, and the other is *mediate.* It is the *near* cause, when men deceive themselves

[1] *And their honourable men are famished.*—Eng. Ver.

under any pretence, and intentionally blind their understanding. Again, it is the *remoter* cause, when men reject the principles from which they ought to frame the rule of their life; for it was their duty to look to God, and to attend to his will. When they disregard his will, they are indeed rebellious and obstinate; but they are ignorant because they refuse to learn, and on this rock they split: and yet ignorance does not excuse them, for of their own accord they bring it on themselves when they reject such a Teacher. So then it is a true statement, that the reason why the people endure such a variety of afflictions is, that they are ignorant of God, and will not allow themselves to be taught by him.

14. *Therefore hell hath enlarged his soul.*[1] In this verse the Prophet intended to heighten the alarm of men who were at their ease, and not yet sufficiently affected by the threatenings which had been held out to them. Though it was shocking to behold *captivity*, and also famine, yet the slowness and insensibility of the people was so great that they did not give earnest heed to these tokens of God's anger. Accordingly the Prophet threatens something still more dreadful, that hell has opened his belly to swallow them all up.

I said a little ago, that what is here stated in the past tense refers partly to the future. Nor is it without good reason that the Prophet speaks of the events as plain and manifest; for he intended to bring them immediately before the people, that they might behold with their eyes what they could not be persuaded to believe. Again, when he compares *hell* or *the grave* to an insatiable beast, by the *soul* he means the belly into which the food is thrown. The general meaning is, that the grave is like a wide and vast gulf, which, at the command of God, yawns to devour men who are condemned to die. This personification carries greater emphasis than if he had said that all are condemned to the grave.

And her glory hath descended, and her multitude. He joins together the nobles and men of low rank, that none may flatter themselves with the hope of escape: as if he had said, "*Death* will carry you away, and all that you possess,

[1] *Therefore hell hath enlarged herself.*—Eng. Ver.

your delicacies, wealth, pleasures, and everything else in which you place your confidence." It is therefore a confirmation of the former statement, and we ought always to attend to the particle לכן, (*lākēn,*) *therefore;* for the people ascribed their calamities to fortune, or in some other way hardened themselves against the Lord's chastisements. On this account Isaiah says that these things do not happen by chance. Besides, men are wont to argue with God, and are so daring and presumptuous that they do not hesitate to call him to account. In order, therefore, to restrain that pride, he shows that the punishments with which they are visited are just, and that it is owing entirely to their own folly that they are miserable in every respect.

15. *And the mighty man shall be bowed down.* This may be called the summing up, for it points out the end and result of those chastisements, that all may be cast down, and that the Lord alone may be exalted. We have formerly met with a similar statement, (chap. ii. 11, 17,) and on that occasion we explained what was the Prophet's meaning;[1] which is, that he shows the design of the chastisements which God inflicts on us. Adversity is so hateful to us, that we can perceive nothing good in it. When he speaks of punishments, we detest and abhor them, because we do not perceive the justice of God. But the prophets remind us of another consideration, that so long as men go on in their sins regardlessly, the justice of God is in some degree smothered, and never shines so brightly as when he punishes our sins. This fruit is indeed very great, and ought to be preferred to the salvation of all men; for the glory of God, which shines in his righteousness, ought to be more highly esteemed than all things else.

There is, therefore, no reason why we should so greatly dread the chastisements which God inflicts upon us, but we ought to embrace with reverence what the prophets declare concerning them. In this way, however, the Prophet has severely chastised arrogant hypocrites, who become the more insolent when they are not punished; as if he had said, "Do you imagine that, when God has endured you so

[1] See p. 116 of this volume.

long, you will at last be able to tread him under your feet? Assuredly he will arise, and will be exalted in your destruction."

As the Prophet has employed, first, the word אדם (*ādām*) and next איש (*ish*), it is supposed that this denotes both the noble and the mean; as if he had said, "Not only will the common people perish, but likewise those who are eminent for riches, honour, and high rank." I cheerfully adopt this opinion; for איש (*ish*) is derived from *strength*, and אדם (*ādām*) from *earth*. But if any one prefer a more simple interpretation, I leave it to his judgment. However this may be, the Prophet includes all men, both the highest and the lowest.

16. *But Jehovah of hosts shall be exalted in judgment.* He expresses the manner, or, as it is commonly called, the formal cause, of the excellence of which he has spoken; as if he had said, "The God of hosts, whom ungodly men insolently tread under their feet, will be raised on high, when he shall show himself to be the judge of the world." In this manner he ridicules the foolish confidence with which the ungodly vaunted; for if judgment and righteousness must at length come forth, it follows that they shall be cast down, since the only way in which those men rise is by overturning the order of nature. And it ought to be carefully observed, that it is not more possible for wicked men to continue in prosperity than for God to permit his glory to be set aside. Though *judgment* is not at all different from *righteousness*, still the repetition is not superfluous.

And God, who is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness. The language becomes more vehement, that wicked men may not, by a false imagination, assure themselves of uninterrupted happiness, which they cannot have, unless by setting aside the *holiness* of God. But since *God is holy* by nature, he must be *sanctified*. Hence it follows that destruction hangs over the wicked, that their obstinacy and rebellion may be subdued, for God cannot deny himself.

17. *And the lambs shall feed after their manner.* Some render it *according to their measure*, or, *in proportion to their capacity*, but it means *in the usual manner*. There

are various ways of explaining this verse; but we ought first of all to observe that the Prophet intended to bring consolation to the godly, who trembled at hearing the dreadful judgments of God; for the more powerfully a man is under the influence of religion, the more does he feel the presence of the hand of God, and the more is he impressed by the apprehension of his judgment. In short, fear and reverence for God cause us to be deeply moved by everything that is presented to us in his name.

Accordingly, after having heard such dreadful threatenings, they must have fainted, if this consolation had not been added as a seasoning, to give them a taste of the mercy of God. It is customary with the prophets always to pay attention to the godly, and to support their minds. "Although, therefore," says Isaiah, "it may seem as if God were about to destroy the whole nation, still he will show himself to be a faithful shepherd to his *lambs*, and will *feed* them in his usual manner."

This is one object; but it was also the intention of the Prophet to repress the haughtiness of the nobles, who oppressed with unjust tyranny the godly and poor, and yet boasted that they were the Church of God. He reminds them, therefore, that it is an idle and false boasting, when they assume the designation of God's flock; for they are *goats*, not *lambs*. Not only will God have it in his power to feed his flock, when the *goats* have been cut off, but it will never fare well with the *lambs* till they have been separated from the *goats*.

And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. There is a still greater diversity here among commentators; but I consider the true meaning to be, that the children of God, banished and treated as foreigners for a time, will regain their lost rights, and will then obtain those places which have been laid *waste*, or reduced to desolation by *the fat ones*, that is, by the proud and cruel men who had seized their property. For he calls the children of God *strangers* who would be exiles for a time, and by *waste places*, or *forsaken places*, he means those possessions which they had relinquished, and which others had seized. He refers to a

custom well known and exceedingly common, which is, that if any one possess fields or houses, he keeps his hand, as it were, stretched over them, so that no one will venture to touch a clod ; but if he forsake them they are seized. The people, therefore, had forsaken the possessions from which they had been expelled, so far as to despair of being ever able to regain them ; so that they might justly be called *forsaken places,* with respect to themselves, and *forsaken places of the fat ones,* because they had been possessed by the mighty and powerful. We may, indeed, view the expression more simply as denoting *forsaken fat places,* but it is more probable that by *the fat ones* are meant tyrants.

18. *Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity !* After having inserted a short consolation for the purpose of allaying the bitterness of punishments as regards the godly, he returns to threatenings, and proceeds to launch those thunderbolts of words which are fitted to awaken some degree of alarm. By *cords* he means nothing else than the allurements by which men suffer themselves to be deceived, and harden their heart in crimes ; for either they ridicule the judgment of God, or they contrive vain excuses, and allege the plea of necessity. Any concealment, therefore, which they employ, he calls *cords ;* for whenever men are prompted to sin by the lust of the flesh, they at first pause, and feel that something within restrains them, which would certainly keep them back, if they did not rush forward with opposing violence, and break through all opposition. When any man is tempted to do what is sinful, his conscience secretly asks him, What are you doing ? And sin never advances so freely as not to feel this check ; for God intended in this manner to provide for the good of mankind, lest all should break out into unbridled licentiousness.

How comes it, then, that men are so obstinate in doing what is sinful ? Assuredly they permit themselves to be deceived by allurements, and stupify their minds, that they may despise the judgment of God, and may thus have some freedom to commit sin. They flatter themselves by imagining that what is sin is not sin, or by some excuse or idle pretence they lessen its enormity. These, then, are *cords,* wicked

ropes, by which they *draw iniquity*. Hence it is evident that the Lord has good reason for threatening them; for they sin, not only of their own accord, but perversely and obstinately, and, in short, they bind themselves to sin, so that they are without excuse.

19. *Who say, Let him make speed.* He specifies one class of sins, by means of which he shows that they *draw sins as by ropes*. When men not only lay aside all thought of the Divine judgment, but despise and treat as fabulous all that is said about it, nothing can be worse than this. He intended to say that the utmost contempt is manifested when men, to whom the judgment of God has been declared, say that it would give them joy to see it, and treat it with ridicule as a silly alarm; which is denoted by these words full of contempt and of wicked confidence: *Let him come, let him make speed.*

Work is here put, by way of eminence, (κατ' ἐξοχὴν,) for *judgment;* for God appears to be doing nothing when he does not punish the crimes of the ungodly; but when he rises up to execute *judgment*, and inflicts punishment, his *work* is then seen, and becomes visible (as is commonly said) by action; because from the very fact we learn that the world is governed by his authority and power. *Work*, therefore, is taken specially for *judgment;* because by means of it we see that God is by no means unemployed, but performs his office. Now, ungodly men speak of him with reproach and contempt, and at this very day we have abundant instances of such wickedness and rebellion; and the same war which was formerly waged by the prophets is that which we also are called to maintain.

The ungodly think that God does nothing, and cares not about the affairs of men; as Epicurus thought that God's highest happiness consisted in his being free from all occupation. Though they imagine that there is some God, yet they do not at all acknowledge his *judgment;* and in the meantime they bid themselves be of good cheer, and resolve that they will not wear themselves out by such thoughts. "Let these prophets and ministers cry, and bawl, and hold out terrors and threatenings; we will wait without

any concern for what they tell us, and in the meantime we will enjoy our mirth." In this way the Prophet relates the speeches of the ungodly, by which they expressed ridicule and contempt of the word. Not only do they say, *Let his work come*, but, *Let him hasten, Let him make speed;* for when he delays, they conclude that everything which God does not execute as soon as he has spoken it is idle talk. Thus Peter represents the ungodly as saying, "*Since the world was created*, the course of nature has been uniform; and, therefore, after so many ages, it is idle to expect a day of judgment." (2 Pet. iii. 4.) In the meantime, they purposely, as it were, provoke God to exert his power immediately, if he has any.

Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come. To *work* is added *counsel*, as if they had said, "Why does God deliberate so long, or say what he intends to do? Let him rather show that what he has decreed is accomplished." It is a great aggravation of their crime, that they wickedly dared to set aside the doctrine which was well known to them. They were more wicked than the heathen Gentiles in this respect, that they despised the doctrine by which he had adopted them to be his peculiar people.

That we may see it. These are proofs of infidelity; for ungodly men will not acknowledge God, unless they have immediate evidence of his presence, and they refuse to believe his words. Now, if the Holy Spirit, by means of this mark, holds up ungodly men to detestation, we ought to testify our faith and piety by the opposite sign, that is, by relying on the word of God, though the effect does not immediately appear; for it is the peculiar excellence of faith to hold us dependent on the mouth of God. True, we next derive confirmation from works, but we must not begin at them; for this is the distinction between the elect and the reprobate, that the elect simply rely on the word, but do not disregard works, while ungodly men scorn and disdain the word, though God speak a hundred times; and yet they continually and eagerly call upon him for works. And when the judgment of God is declared, they say, "Where is it?" They cannot endure the mention of it, unless it be imme-

diately made known by action. When men are so immoderate, it follows that they have no faith, but rather obstinate rebelliousness, which more and more withdraws and estranges man from God.

20. *Wo to them that call evil good.* Though some limit this statement to judges, yet if it be carefully examined, we shall easily learn from the whole context that it is general; for, having a little before reproved those who cannot listen to any warnings, he now proceeds with the same reproof. It is evident that men of this sort have always some excuse to plead, and some way of imposing on themselves; and, therefore, there is no end to their reproachful language, when their crimes are brought to light. But here he particularly reproves the insolence of those who endeavour to overthrow all distinction between *good* and *evil.*

The preposition ל (*lamed*), prefixed to the words *good* and *evil*, is equivalent to *Of;* and therefore the meaning is, *They who say* OF *evil, It is good, and* OF *good, It is evil;* that is, they who by vain hypocrisy conceal, excuse, and disguise wicked actions, as if they would change the nature of everything by their sophistical arguments, but who, on the contrary deface good actions by their calumnies. These things are almost always joined together, for every one in whom the fear of God dwells is restrained both by conscience and by modesty from venturing to apologize for his sins, or to condemn what is good and right; but they who have not this fear do not hesitate with the same impudence to commend what is bad and to condemn what is good; which is a proof of desperate wickedness.

This statement may be applied to various cases; for if a *wo* is here pronounced even on private individuals, when they *say of evil that it is good, and of good that it is evil,* how much more on those who have been raised to any elevated rank, and discharge a public office, whose duty it is to defend what is right and honourable! But he addresses a general reproof to all who flatter themselves in what is evil, and who, through the hatred which they bear to virtue, condemn what is done aright; and not only so, but who, by the subterfuges which they employ for the sake of concealing

their own enormities, harden themselves in wickedness. Such persons, the Prophet tells us, act as if they would change *light into darkness, and sweet into bitter;* by which he means that their folly is monstrous, for it would tend to confound and destroy all the principles of nature.

21. *Wo to them that are wise in their own eyes!* Here he proceeds to rebuke those on whom no instruction can produce a good effect, and who do not allow any wise counsels or godly warnings to gain admission. In short, he pronounces a curse on obstinate scorners, who set up either the lusts of the flesh or a preposterous confidence in their wisdom, in opposition to God's instruction and warnings. And not only does he rebuke those who are puffed up with a false conviction of their wisdom, and are ashamed to learn from others, but he likewise pronounces a general condemnation on all who, through prejudices in their own favour, refuse to hear God speaking, and to listen to his holy warnings.

This fault has been too common in all ages, and we see it in very many persons at the present day, who, though they would shrink from openly rejecting the doctrine of godliness, are yet so far from being truly obedient and teachable, that they haughtily reject everything that does not please them. They acknowledge that they need some bridle, but, on the other hand, are so much blinded by their presumption, that, when God points out the way, they immediately rebel; and not only so, but break out into violent indignation at the censure passed on their proceedings. Nay, where is the man who renounces his own judgment, and is ready to learn only from the mouth of God? But nothing is more destructive than this deceitful show of wisdom; for the beginning of piety is willingness to be taught, when we have renounced our own judgment and follow wherever God calls.

Nor is this false belief condemned solely on the ground of its rendering men disobedient to God, and thus being the cause of their ruin, but also on the ground of being in itself what God cannot endure. We must become fools if we desire to be God's disciples. But it is also certain that mad rebellion reigns wherever there is not found that modesty and humility which leads a man willingly to yield subjection.

In their own eyes means what we say in French, *à leur semblant*, that is, *in their own conceit.*

22. *Wo to them that are mighty to drink wine!* Isaiah now censures another vice, namely, drunkenness and excess in eating, of which he had spoken before; so that probably this chapter is collected from various sermons, and the leading topics only are briefly touched; for when the Prophet saw no repentance, he was forced to repeat and frequently inculcate the same instructions. He therefore returns to the same reproofs which he had previously noticed; for he again discourses about drunkenness, luxury, covetousness, and other corruptions. Hence we ought to conclude, that when warnings produce no good effect, we ought to employ greater earnestness in addressing the obstinate and disobedient, and that we must not be afraid of giving offence by our eagerness, but must frequently repeat the reproofs, until they either yield or manifest incurable malice.

By calling them *strong* or *powerful to drink*, he wittily accuses them of wasting their strength in bacchanalian warfare. It is disgraceful and beastly ambition, when a man of vigorous health makes a display of his strength by drinking largely. Employing a figure of speech (*synecdoche*) which is frequent in the Prophets, and indeed in the whole of Scripture, he takes a part for the whole; as if he had said, "Wo to gluttony; wo to intemperance." But he purposely mentioned that which was disgraceful in the highest degree, in order to render that vice generally hated and abhorred; for, as we have said, nothing is more base or disgraceful than for a man to make trial of his strength in swallowing food or in guzzling wine, and thus struggling with himself so as to cram down as much as his belly can hold. Such men keep by no rule of life, and do not know why God gives them nourishment; for we eat and drink to support the body, and not to destroy it. We live that we may yield worship and obedience to God, and that we may render assistance to our neighbours. When men act so as not to maintain their strength, but to destroy it by trying how much food and wine they can bear, most certainly they are worse than beasts.

23. *Who justify the wicked for a reward.* He censures a

corruption which at that time abounded in judgment-seats, and points out the reason why there is no room for justice in these places, namely, that they are under the influence of *gifts*. For covetousness *blindeth the eyes of the wise, and perverteth* all regard to what is good and just, even among those who would otherwise be disposed to follow what is right. (Ex. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 19.)

It may be objected that there are other methods, and that it is not by *gifts* only that judgments are perverted; for favour, hatred, friendship, and other sinful passions, often blind the understanding. This is undoubtedly true; but the Prophet had in his eye what happens for the most part, (ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ,) and at the same time did not intend to spare those vices which he did not express by name. Following this example, godly teachers ought to be wise and careful in observing and correcting the vices which most extensively abound among the people, and most of all to oppose everything which appears to be sanctioned by wicked custom.

Now this corruption which is mentioned is that which most frequently of all is to be found in judgment-seats; and, therefore, it ought to be most carefully avoided by those judges who wish to form an upright judgment. Nor ought we to listen to what is affirmed by many, that *gifts* are not bestowed on them for that purpose, or that, after having accepted them, they are as free as ever to give a just decision; for where *gifts* are allowed, the regard to what is just and right must be corrupted, and it is impossible for your mind not to be favourably disposed towards him from whom you received them. In short, we should hear the Lord, who declares that the understanding of the wisest man is corrupted, and the disposition of the most upright man is perverted, unless we choose to be thought wiser than God.

24. *Therefore as the flame of fire devoureth the stubble.* Lest it should be thought that he has so frequently cried out without good reason, he again shows what grievous and dreadful punishment awaits the nation, and threatens utter destruction to the stubborn, because they did not permit themselves to be brought back to the right path, but obstinately resisted instruction. He employs metaphors exceed-

ingly well adapted to express his meaning, and better fitted to affect their hearts than if he had spoken plainly and without a figure. He begins with a comparison, but immediately slides into a metaphor, attributing a *root* and *branch* to the nation as to a tree. Under those two words he includes all the strength, either hidden or visible, that belongs to the nation, and says that the whole will be destroyed; for when the root, which alone gives strength and nourishment to the tree, becomes rotten, it is all over with the tree; and in like manner he threatens that it is all over with the nation, and that its whole strength is wasted and consumed.

Because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts. He does not now enumerate, as formerly, the particular kinds of crime by which they had provoked the wrath of God, but assigns a general cause, namely, contempt of the law of God; for this, as all men know, is the source of everything bad. And it is no small aggravation of their crime that, when the will of God had been made known to them in his law, it was not through ignorance or mistake, but through inveterate malice, that they shook off the yoke of God, and abandoned themselves to every kind of licentiousness; which was nothing else than to reject so kind a Father, and to give themselves up to be the slaves of the devil. Besides, he accuses them of open revolt; as if he had said that it was not in one or a few instances that they were rebellious, but that they might be regarded as treacherous apostates, and had altogether forsaken God.

And loathed the word of the Holy One of Israel. He complains that they not only despised the word of God, but—what is far more shocking—turned away from it, or threw it away in wicked disdain. But if contempt for *the law of God* is the source, head, and accumulation of all that is evil, there is nothing against which we ought more carefully to guard than that Satan should take away our reverence for it; and if there are any faults to which we are liable, we ought, at least, to allow a remedy to be applied to them, if we do not choose, by wickedly rejecting it, to draw down upon ourselves everlasting destruction.

25. *Therefore is the anger of the* Lord *kindled.* In this

verse the Prophet relates the former punishments which the Jews had already endured, and shows that they are not near an end; but that, on the contrary, heavier judgments await them, if they do not return to the right path. I readily acknowledge that the past tense is frequently employed instead of the future, but the meaning which I have stated will best agree with the context; for there are two things quite distinct from each other, which he lays down, on account of the resolute obstinacy of the people. First, how God perceives their crimes. Secondly, since there are no signs of repentance, he has other scourges within his reach for chastising the people. Thirdly, he describes what those scourges are, and forewarns them that the Assyrians will come at the bidding of the Lord, as soon as he shall express it by merely *hissing* to them, (ver. 26.)

Such is the connection of what the Prophet states; and hence it ought to be observed that the great body of men, as soon as they have escaped any calamity, forget their chastisements, and no longer regard them as the judgments of God; and that, though experience be the instructor of fools, still they grow hardened by strokes. This insensibility Isaiah sharply rebukes; as if he had said, "Have you so quickly forgotten the calamities under which you lately groaned? Whence came the distressful casting out of dead bodies, but because God had raised his arm against you? And if God has discharged the office of a judge, why do not those recent chastisements induce you to fear him, and to refrain from drawing down a succession of chastisements by new crimes?"

Accordingly, he repeats the term עַל־כֵּן, (*gnăl kēn,*) *therefore;* as if he had said that those distresses are not accidental, but are manifest tokens of God's vengeance; and so he expressly says that God *was angry with his people;* for if the Jews had not fallen from their own rank, their condition would have been happier than that of any other nation. When God's chosen people, therefore, are treated by him with so much sharpness and severity, it is beyond all doubt that he has been provoked by heinous crimes. At the same time he refutes the false boasting by which the Jews were wont to vaunt and exalt themselves, as if they ought to be

exempt from chastisements on the ground of their being God's peculiar people.

And the mountains trembled. By this comparison the dreadful nature of those punishments to which they were insensible is described in such a manner as to prove more clearly the stupidity of the people. They were more stupid than inanimate objects, if they did not perceive the wrath of God, and the dreadful vengeance which had been inflicted on the kingdom of Israel.

For all these things. He threatens heavier chastisements in future, as we have already said; for although wicked men acknowledge that the Lord has punished them, still they think that they have no right to expect anything more than one or two chastisements. As if therefore nothing worse could befall them, and as if God's power to punish them had been exhausted, they wrap themselves up in blind indifference. This is the reason why he exclaims that the wrath of God is not yet appeased, and that, although it has inflicted on them many calamities, still it has within its stores many weapons from which they have reason to dread innumerable wounds.

The copulative ו (*vau*) may be taken as a disjunctive, so as to mean, *but, on the contrary, his hand is stretched out still.* He refers to what he had formerly said, that *the hand of God is stretched out.* He tells them that it is not yet drawn back, and that it may yet pursue them, and inflict plagues of the same kind, or even of greater severity. We ought diligently to meditate on these statements, in order to shake off that drowsiness to which the greater part of men are frequently liable, even after having received chastisements.

26. *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations.* In this and the following verses he describes the nature of the punishment which the Lord would inflict on his people; namely, that they were about to suffer from the Assyrians a similar, or even a heavier calamity, than that which their brethren the Israelites had lately endured. Many distresses had indeed been suffered by themselves from the Assyrians, though the kingdom of Judah was not yet overturned. Besides, what had befallen the kingdom of Israel might be viewed as

a mirror in which they could behold God's wrath and righteous chastisement.

And yet this prediction, though it was accompanied by clear proofs, must undoubtedly have appeared to be incredible; for at that time they enjoyed repose, and the slightest truce of any kind easily laid them asleep. He says, therefore, that this calamity will come to them from distant nations, from whom nothing of this kind was expected; and he sounds an alarm as if the enemy were already at hand. It is not for the sake of soothing their fear that he uses those words, *from afar*, and *from the end of the earth;* but, on the contrary, he speaks in this manner for the express purpose of informing them that they ought not to judge of the anger of God from what meets the eye, for we are wont to judge of dangers from the outward appearance of things. Now, if the enemies are not so near, or if other circumstances hinder them from giving us immediate annoyance, we give ourselves no concern. Thus the people were lulled into a profound sleep, as if there were no danger to be dreaded. But Isaiah says that this will not hinder the Lord from *erecting a banner*, and instantly commissioning the Assyrians to slaughter them. The expression is metaphorical; for when a banner is displayed it is customary for soldiers, at the bidding of their general, to advance in hostile array and rush into the battle.

He will hiss to it.[1] Though a change of number frequently occurs in Scripture, yet it is on solid grounds that the Prophet, by changing the number, makes many nations to be but one nation. The meaning is, that when it shall please God to assemble various nations, and form them into one body, it will not be a confused multitude, but will resemble a body which has a visible head that rules and guides. He chose to employ the word *hiss* rather than a word of weightier import, such as *sound a trumpet*, or anything of that sort; in order to show that God does not need to sound a trumpet in order to call the enemies to battle, and that he has no

[1] *Sibilabit ad eam.* In the version prefixed to the Commentary on this chapter, our Author has likewise observed here the singular number, *sibilabit genti, he will hiss to the nation.* Bishop Stock, following Bishop Lowth, renders ושקר לו, (*vĕshākăr lo,*) *he will hiss to every one of them.—Ed.*

difficulty in inflicting punishment when the time for taking vengeance is fully at hand, for by a mere nod he can accomplish the whole.[1]

And lo, it will come speedy and swift. This confirms still more what I have already observed, that we ought not to judge of the anger of the Lord from the present appearance of things; for although everything appears to give assurances of peace, yet suddenly war will break out from a quarter from which we do not expect it. Even though we think that we are defended on all sides by friends, yet God will stir up enemies from the farthest corners of the earth, who will break through every obstruction, and overtake us with ease, as if the way were plain and smooth. This ought to be carefully observed, that we may not suffer ourselves to be blinded by vain presumption and foolish confidence.

We ought also to observe that wars are not kindled accidentally, or by an arrangement of men, but by the command of God, as if he assembled the soldiers by the sound of a trumpet. Whether, therefore, we are afflicted by battle, or by famine, or by pestilence, let us know that all this comes from the hand of God, for all things obey him and follow his direction. And yet it was not the intention of the Chaldeans to obey God, for they were hurried on by their eagerness to obtain wealth and power, while he has quite another object in view: but God employs their agency for executing his judgments. Hence arises a remarkable and illustrious display of the power of God, which is not limited by the will of men, or dependent on their decisions, but leads them, though contrary to their wish, or without their knowledge, to obey him. And yet it is no excuse for the ungodly that they are drawn contrary to the disposition of their mind.

[1] "The metaphor is taken from the practice of those that keep bees, who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again by συρίσμασι, by a hiss or a whistle;" Cyril on the place: and to the same purpose Theodoret, *ibid.* In chap. vii. 18, the metaphor is more apparent by being carried further, where the hostile armies are expressed by the fly and the bee:—

> "Jehovah shall hist the fly,
> That is in the utmost parts of Egypt;
> And the bee, that is in the land of Assyria."

On which place see Deut. i. 44; Ps. cxviii. 12.—*Lowth.*

and do not willingly serve God, for they aim at nothing else than fraud, cruelty, and violence; and by their cruelty God punishes the transgressions and crimes of his people.

27. *None shall be weary, nor stumble among them.* The meaning is, that everything will be prepared and arranged in such a manner that there shall be no delay or obstruction to their march; as if a prince, having recruited the ranks of his soldiers, immediately gave orders that the roads should be cleared, provisions obtained, and everything necessary provided. He therefore shows that they will be fleet and swift, and that there will be nothing to hinder their rapid march.

None shall slumber nor sleep. He expresses their vast activity by saying that they will not be drowsy. In these words, *they shall not slumber nor sleep,* the natural order is inverted. He ought rather to have said, *They shall not sleep nor slumber;* for it is a smaller matter to *slumber* than to *sleep.* But that phrase ought to be explained in this manner: *They shall not slumber nor even sleep;* that is, they will be so far from *sleeping,* that they will not even *slumber.* You have an instance of this in these words: *Lo, he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.* (Ps. cxxi. 4.) It is a Hebrew phrase, with which neither the Greek nor the Latin idiom agrees.

28. *Their arrows will be sharp.* He means that they will be provided with necessary weapons. The custom alluded to is that which existed among the Assyrians and other eastern nations, who frequently made use of bows and arrows in battle, as Englishmen of the present day enter into the battle-field with a loaded quiver.[1] Under this class he includes every kind of weapons of war. But as the way was long, and the journey difficult, the Jew might think that many things

[1] More than three hundred years have elapsed since CALVIN wrote these words, and *Englishmen of the present day* do not carry bows and arrows into the field of battle. On the whole subject of war the opinions of Englishmen are undergoing an important revolution. Many of them entertain a confident hope that ere long the bullet as well as the arrow, the cannon as well as the bow, will be laid aside; that the revolting spectacle of human beings drawn up in companies, for the purpose of wholesale murder, will disappear from the earth; and that men will *beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.—Ed.*

would occur to interrupt the march of the enemy. He therefore says, that *the hoofs of the horses will be like flint;* by which he means that they will suffer no molestation, and will at length arrive in Judea without weariness. For a similar reason he compares *their wheels to a whirlwind.* The ancients were wont to employ chariots in going to war, and therefore he mentions not only *horses,* but *wheels.* All these circumstances must be understood to relate to the haste and rapidity with which they would proceed; or, in other words, that no length of journey would prevent the Lord from carrying forward the enemies without delay for the destruction of the Jews.

29. *His roaring shall be like that of a lion.* This denotes fierceness and cruelty, for he compares the Chaldeans to *lions,* which, we know, are frightful to behold, and savage by nature; as if he had said that they would not be men who were moved by any feeling of compassion or tenderness, but rather that they would be savage beasts. He adds, that they will likewise possess great strength, so that none will venture to approach for rescuing their prey. He means that the Jews will have no defence for warding off their attacks, because the dread of their cruelty will keep all at a distance from them. It was God who employed their agency in punishing the Jews, and therefore it was necessary that they should be armed with formidable power, that this wayward people might at length acknowledge that they had to do not with men but with *God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall.* (Heb. x. 31.)

30. *He shall roar against him.*[1] The Prophet adds this that the Jews may understand that the fierce attack of the Chaldeans is not accidental, but that they have been appointed by God and are guided by his hand. By *the roaring of the sea* he means an attack so violent that it will look like a deluge, by which the whole of Judea will suffer shipwreck. He likewise cuts off all hope by foretelling that the punishment will have no alleviation and no end. "The Jews," he says, "will do what is usually done in a season of perplexity, will cast their eyes up and down to discover the means of

[1] *And in that day they shall roar against them.*—Eng. Ver.

escape; but in whatever direction they look, whether to heaven or to earth, they will find no relief whatever; for on all sides distresses and calamities will overwhelm them." This mode of expression has come to be frequently employed even by the common people, when misery and ruin appear on all sides, and no escape or relief can be found. This must unavoidably happen when the Lord pursues us, so that his uplifted arm meets our eyes on every side, and, wherever we turn, we behold his creatures armed against us to execute his judgments; for we may sometimes escape the hand of men, but how can we escape the hand of God?

CHAPTER VI.

1. In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.

4. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

6. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7. And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8. Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

1. Anno mortis regis Usiæ, vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, cujus extrema replebant templum.

2. Et seraphim stabant super ipsum: erant singulis sex alæ; duabus operiebant faciem suam; duabus tegebant pedes suos; et duabus volabant.

3. Et clamabant alter alteri, dicentes, Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Iehova exercituum; plena est omnis terra gloriæ ejus.

4. Et commota sunt superliminaria postium a voce clamantis; et domus impleta est fumo.

5. Tunc dixi, Væ mihi, quia excisus sum (*vel in silentium redactus*); cùm homo sim pollutis labiis, et in medio populi habitem polluta labia habentis; et tamen regem Iehovam exercituum viderunt oculi mei.

6. Volavit autem ad me unus ex seraphim; habens in manu sua carbonem ardentem, forcipe correptum ab altari.

7. Et applicans super os meum, dixit, Ecce, tetigit hoc labia tua, et expiabitur peccatum tuum.

8. Postea audivi vocem Domini dicentis, Quem mittam? et quis ibit nobis? Tum dixi, Ecce ego, mitte me.

9. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11. Then said I, LORD, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12. And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13. But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves, so* the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

9. Tum dixit, Vade, et dic popul isti; audiendo audite, et ne intel ligatis; videndo videto, et nesciatis

10. Obstina cor populi hujus, e aures ejus aggrava, et oculos eju obline; ne fortè videat oculis suis et auribus suis audiat, et cor ejus in telligat, et ubi conversus fuerit, si illi sanatio.

11. Et dixi, Usque quo, Domine et ait, Dum fuerint vastatæ civitate absque habitatore, et domus vacu atæ fuerint hominibus, et terra re dacta fuerit in solitudinem;

12. Donec procul amoverit Deu homines, sitque multa vastitas i medio terræ;

13. Donec in ea decima, et rever tetur; et erit in excidium sicut tili et quercus, quibus in projectione es subsistentia; ita in hac erit subsis tentia, semen sanctum.

1. *In the year that king Uzziah died.* This is usually th beginning of the sixth chapter; but some think that it i the beginning of the book itself, and that in collecting th prophecies of Isaiah an error was committed. The reaso which they assign is, that the Prophet here declines the offic of a teacher, which he would not have refused if he ha hitherto discharged it; that he appears to be a mere novic as yet unacquainted with his calling; and besides, that h declares that he has now seen the Lord, and that he has no seen him before. But such arguments I consider, as I hav already noticed, to be too feeble and unsatisfactory; and I reply that it ought not to be thought strange that he was s completely overpowered by this extraordinary vision as t forget that he was a prophet. For there was no feeling i him which was not overpowered by the presence of God, s that, like one who had lost his senses, he willingly plunged himself in darkness, or rather, like one who despaired of life, he of his own accord chose to die. And it is necessary that the godly should be affected in this manner, when the Lord gives them tokens of his presence, that they may be brought low and utterly confounded. Besides, in the person of his

servant God intended to strike his rebellious people with alarm; and therefore we need not wonder if he offers an apology for himself under the overwhelming influence of fear, and likewise because he had not felt the weight of his office, as he now felt it, after having beheld an illustrious display of the majesty of God.

But why was not this vision exhibited to him at the beginning? I answer, it was necessary in regard to the time, that he might be more and more confirmed in the discharge of his office. We have an instance of this in the Apostles themselves; for at first they were sent out with an injunction not to pass beyond the limits of Judea, (Matt. x. 5;) but after that Christ had risen, he again set them *apart* in a new and solemn manner, *breathed on them, bidding them receive the Holy Ghost,* (John xx. 21, 22;) and not only so, but sending his Spirit from heaven *in the form of tongues of fire,* invested them with extraordinary power. (Acts ii. 3.) Thus, on account of the various changes of times and of kings, it was necessary that Isaiah should be encouraged and again attested by a new vision; that he might be excited to perseverance, and might afterwards proceed with greater cheerfulness in his course; and also that the Jews might perceive his ministry to be supported by heavenly authority.

This appears to me to be a sufficient reason why this vision was not exhibited to him at the very beginning, but after that he had for some time discharged the office of a teacher. That this was not the beginning of the prophecy is evident enough from the consideration that the preface, which we have already examined, is much better adapted for the commencement, and more appropriate than what is contained in this chapter; and every approach having been shut up by the hard-hearted obstinacy of the people, it was proper that he should burst forth in this vehement manner. Besides, it is probable that he had long performed the office of a teacher under King Uzziah, who, I think, was dead before this prediction was published. In short, the Prophet means that it was not till he had commenced his course that God appeared to him.

Some think that *death* here means *leprosy,* which undoubt-

edly was a civil death, when the king was compelled to withdraw from the society of men, and to lay down the reins of government, (2 Kings xv. 5;) but I choose rather to take *death* in its literal sense. So then, I think that Isaiah uttered the former predictions during the reign of Uzziah, even after he had been struck with leprosy; and that when he had died, and Jotham had succeeded him, this vision was presented to Isaiah. We know what various commotions are produced by a change of kings, so that we need not wonder that Isaiah had his calling again sealed. But the prophecy itself, which follows, will sufficiently show that he had been a public teacher for some time before he *saw the* LORD; for it relates that the blinding of the people, whose obstinacy he had experienced to such an extent that he might have been induced to cease from his undertaking, for he saw that he was doing no good. The Lord, therefore, confirms him by this vision, that the opposition may not prevent him from boldly discharging his office, and performing what he undertook at the commandment of God.

I saw the LORD. It is asked, How could Isaiah see God who *is a Spirit*, (John iv. 24,) and, therefore, cannot be seen with bodily eyes? Nay, more, since the understandings of men cannot rise to his boundless height, how can he be seen in a visible shape? But we ought to be aware that, when God exhibited himself to the view of the Fathers, he never appeared such as he actually is, but such as the capacity of men could receive. Though men may be said to creep on the ground, or at least dwell far below the heavens, there is no absurdity in supposing that God comes down to them in such a manner as to cause some kind of mirror to reflect the rays of his glory. There was, therefore, exhibited to Isaiah such a form as enabled him, according to his capacity, to perceive the inconceivable majesty of God; and thus he attributes to God a *throne*, a *robe*, and a bodily appearance.

Hence we learn a profitable doctrine, that whenever God grants any token of his presence, he is undoubtedly present with us, for he does not amuse us by unmeaning shapes, as men wickedly disfigure him by their contrivances. Since, therefore, that exhibition was no deceitful representation of

the presence of God, Isaiah justly declares that he *saw him.* In like manner, when it is said that John *saw the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove,* (John i. 32,) the name of the Holy Spirit is applied to the outward sign, because in the representation there was no deception; and yet he did not see the essence of the Spirit, but had a clear and undoubted proof, so that he could not doubt that the Spirit of God rested on Christ.

Secondly, it is asked, Who was that LORD? John tells us that it was Christ, (John xii. 41,) and justly, for God never revealed himself to the Fathers but in his eternal Word and only begotten Son. Yet it is wrong, I think, to limit this, as some do, to the person of Christ; for it is indefinitely, on the contrary, that the Prophet calls him God. Nor do their views derive any support from the word אֲדֹנָי, (*adonai,*) which seems particularly to apply to Christ; for it is often applied to God in an absolute and unrestricted manner. In this passage, therefore, God is mentioned indefinitely, and yet it is correctly said that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, for at that very time he was *the image of the invisible God.* (Col. i. 15.)

Sitting upon a throne. He could not have given a better description of God, in regard to place, than in the person of a Judge, that his majesty might strike greater terror into the Jews; for we shall afterwards see the dreadful judgment which the Lord pronounced from his judgment-seat. But lest we should suppose that the Prophet contrived the manner in which he would paint God, we ought to know that he faithfully describes the very form in which God was represented and exhibited to him. It may be questioned whether the Prophet was conducted into the temple, or saw this vision while he was asleep. Though many things are frequently adduced on both sides, which are fitted to leave the matter in doubt, yet it may be conjectured with some probability, that even if he had not been within the temple, this vision might have been presented to him, either in his own house or on a field, in the same manner as to other prophets.

And his remotest parts filled the temple.[1] Almost all the

[1] *And his train filled the temple.* [Or, *the skirts thereof.*]—Eng. Ver. *And the train of his robe filled the temple.*—Lowth. *And his flowing train*

commentators understand by this the fringes of his robe, though it may be understood to refer to the extremities of the judgment-seat, giving us to understand that its dimensions were so vast as to extend to every part of *the temple.* He intends to ascribe to God a venerable aspect, and far beyond any human form. There is great weight in the circumstance that he appeared in *the temple;* for he had promised that he would meet with his people there, and the people expected his answers from that place, as Solomon had expressly stated at the dedication of it. (1 Kings viii. 30.) In order, therefore, that the people might understand that those things came from God, on whom they called every day, and on whom they relied with a vain confidence which puffed them up, this vision was exhibited to the Prophet *in the temple.* To the certainty of what was said it contributed not a little, that he openly proclaimed that the discourse was not pronounced to him by any mortal man, but was a heavenly oracle, uttered by that God whose name they were accustomed disdainfully to hold out as a pretence, whenever they wished to make any extravagant claims; for otherwise this prophecy would have been harsh and repulsive, and needed great confirmation. It was also not uncommon with the Prophets to say that the Lord spake to them *from his temple,* or *from his sanctuary.*

2. *And the seraphim stood upon it.* Having declared that God appeared to him full of majesty and of glory, he adds, that God was attended by angels, whom the Prophet calls *seraphim* on account of their fervour. Though the etymology of this word is well known, yet various reasons are adduced. Some think that they are called *seraphim* because they burn with the love of God; others, because they are swift like fire; others, because they are bright. However that may be, this description holds out to us, as in sunbeams, the brightness of God's infinite majesty, that we may learn by it to behold and adore his wonderful and overwhelming glory.

filled the temple.—Stock. That author adds in a note: "I add the epithet *flowing,* to distinguish the train of a robe from what the English word equally imports, a train of attendants; and שול is from של to loosen, to flow loosely."—*Ed.*

Many think that there were two *seraphim*, as there were two cherubim that encompassed the ark of the testimony. This opinion I willingly adopt, though I do not venture to make any assertion where Scripture is silent. As it is customary with the sacred writers to accommodate their descriptions of God to those outward signs which were commonly used and familiarly known among the godly, it is possible that the Prophet saw a representation of this kind. While I hold this to be a probable conjecture, I leave room for other interpretations which some may be disposed to prefer; for Daniel saw not two angels only, but thousands of thousands of angels. (Dan. vii. 10.)

Each one had six wings. This representation is instructive; for those wings thus arranged contained some mystery which it was the will of the Lord should not remain wholly unknown. The *two wings* with which the angels *fly* mean nothing else than their ready and cheerful performance of the commandments of God. On this point the resemblance is so clear and manifest, that it will be at once admitted by all who do not take delight in controversy. The *two wings* with which they *cover their face* show plainly enough that even angels cannot endure God's brightness, and that they are dazzled by it in the same manner as when we attempt to gaze upon the radiance of the sun. And if angels are overwhelmed by the majesty of God, how great will be the rashness of men if they venture to intrude so far! Let us, therefore, learn that our inquiries concerning God ought never to go beyond what is proper and lawful, that our knowledge may soberly and modestly taste what is far above our capacity. And yet the angels do not cover their face in such a manner as not to be favoured with beholding God in some degree; for their flight is not at random. In like manner we too ought to look at God, but only so far as our capacity shall enable us.

As to the remaining *two wings*, which were placed lower, the difficulty is somewhat greater. Some think that the angels *covered their feet*, that they might not touch the earth, and contract any defilement from it, as human beings like ourselves are wont to do; for in walking we gather filth

and dust, and accordingly, so long as we dwell on earth, we are always tainted by some kind of contagion. This reminds believers that they will have no intercourse with angels till they raise themselves high, and are no longer fastened to the earth.

Such is the interpretation given by some expositors. But I rather agree with those who think that the use of those *wings* was opposite to that of the upper *wings;* for, as by the upper wings they *cover their face,* that they may not be overpowered by God's brightness, so they have also lower wings to conceal them from our view. Now, if it be true that we cannot behold the small and feeble rays of the Divine brightness without being altogether overpowered, how could we gaze upon that unspeakably bright and glorious majesty which lays prostrate all our faculties? Let men learn, therefore, that they are far distant from a perfect knowledge of God, since they cannot even reach to the angels. The latter appears to me to be the more correct exposition, but I do not disapprove of the former.

3. *And they cried one to another.* It was necessary that all these things should be presented to the Prophet in vision, in order to produce a stronger impression on the people, and on Isaiah himself; for the vision was not less necessary to him than to the whole nation, because sharp and painful struggles awaited him, and he could not have boldly announced those events if he had not been previously confirmed. The people also, being warned by this vision how great and how dreadful was the majesty of God, by whom this condemnation was pronounced, had good reason for being alarmed. He who now came forth to public view is God, at the sight of whom the very angels tremble, whose praises they continually and loudly utter, and whom, in a word, they serve and obey; but men, whom he had been pleased to adopt as his children, obstinately and rebelliously opposed him.

Now, when we are informed that the angels are employed in uttering the glory of God, let us know that their example is set before us for imitation; for the most holy service that we can render to him is, to be employed in praising his

name. When he associates us with angels, it is in order that, while we sojourn on earth, we may resemble and be joined to the inhabitants of heaven. That the harmony between us and the angels may be in every respect complete, we must take care not only that the praises of God may be sounded by our tongues, but likewise that all the actions of our life may correspond to our professions; and this will only be done if the chief aim of our actions be the glory of God.

Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The ancients quoted this passage when they wished to prove that there are three persons in one essence of the Godhead. I do not disagree with their opinion; but if I had to contend with heretics, I would rather choose to employ stronger proofs; for they become more obstinate, and assume an air of triumph, when inconclusive arguments are brought against them; and they might easily and readily maintain that, in this passage, as in other parts of Scripture, the number "three" denotes perfection. Although, therefore, I have no doubt that the angels here describe One God in Three Persons, (and, indeed, it is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit,) yet I think that it would be better to employ more conclusive passages, lest, in proving an article of our faith, we should expose ourselves to the scorn of heretics. And, indeed, this repetition rather points out unwearied perseverance, as if the Prophet had said, that the angels never cease from their melody in singing the praises of God, as the holiness of God supplies us with inexhaustible reasons for them.

The whole earth is full of his glory. Literally it is, *the fulness of the whole earth*, which might be understood to refer to the fruits, and animals, and manifold riches with which God has enriched the earth, and might convey this meaning, that in the ornaments and great variety of furniture of the world the glory of God shines, because they are so many proofs of a father's love. But the more simple and natural interpretation is, that *the glory of God fills the whole world*, or is spread through every region of the earth. There is also, I think, an implied contrast, by which he puts down the foolish boasting of the Jews, who thought that the glory

of God was nowhere to be seen but among themselves, and wished to have it shut up within their own temple. But Isaiah shows that it is so far from being confined to so narrow limits, that it fills *the whole earth.* And to this agrees the prophecy which immediately follows, (ver. 10,) about the blinding of the Jews, which opened up for the Gentiles admission into the Church of God; for they occupied that place which the Jews had forsaken and left empty.

4. *And the lintels of the posts were moved.* This noise was an indication that it was not a human voice which the Prophet had heard; for no mortal man has a voice so powerful as to be capable of making the *lintels* and *posts* shake. Now, the Lord intended not only to establish the authority of his voice over the Prophet, but to confirm it to posterity in all ages, that it might never be forgotten. Let us, therefore, know that this noise confirms at this day the voice of God, that we may tremble whenever he speaks; for if inanimate and dumb creatures are moved, what ought we to do, who feel, smell, taste, and understand, for no other purpose than that we may obey his word in a holy and reverent manner?

And the house was filled with smoke. This was the common and ordinary sign which the Lord employed with his ancient people; for we read that, whenever Moses entered into the tabernacle, *smoke* was wont to be diffused through it in such a manner that the people could not see either Moses or the tabernacle. (Exod. xxxiii. 9.) The *smoke,* therefore, which Isaiah describes was not an unusual occurrence; but in the ordinary way God intended to demonstrate that he would display his power in executing judgment on the people.

But it may be asked, Why did God manifest his presence by this sign rather than by any other? This question may be answered in two ways. First, it was always the will of God to repress the insolence of men, in pushing their inquiries about his majesty beyond what is proper; for on this point almost all men are too rash and daring. They wish to rise above the clouds, and to penetrate into the secrets of God, while they do not see what lies at their feet. Hence

arises a labyrinth of errors, and when the minds of men have been entangled in it, they adopt false and pretended modes of worship; for when men allow themselves to adopt any false notions about God, there is nothing which they will not venture to attempt against him. It was not without good reason, therefore, that he made use of *smoke*, in order to remind men of their weakness; and yet he did not intend that they should be blind or stupid, that is, that they should have the stupidity and error which the papists disguise under the name of simplicity; but he forbids us to inquire or search beyond what he has revealed to us in his word; for, as Augustine says, "that is a learned ignorance." Whenever, therefore, *smoke* of this kind is mentioned, let us know that it lays a restraint upon us from indulging curiosity in our researches into the purpose of God.

Secondly, this *smoke* ought to strike terror, as David, when describing an angry and terrible God, says that *clouds and darkness are round about him.* (Ps. xcvii. 2.) This also agrees well with the present passage; for he pronounces a dreadful judgment, namely, the blinding of the Jews. Others think that it indicated the burning by which he consumed the temple; but the view which I have given is more probable.

5. *Wo to me! for I am undone.* The Prophet now relates how powerfully he was affected by that vision; namely, that he was so terrified by seeing God, that he expected immediate destruction. He assigns the reason for believing that it is all over with him; *because*, says he, *I am a man of unclean lips.*

I wonder why Jerome renders it, *because I was silent;* seeing that there is no ambiguity in the expression. דמה (*dāmāh*) does indeed signify *to be silent*, but here the undoubted mark of a passive verb is added. This passage may likewise be rendered, *Wo to me! for I have been reduced to silence.* In the Scriptures *silence* is often taken for death; and those who have been buried are said to have been *reduced to silence.* But as the meaning is the same, I will not dispute much about the translation.

The Prophet therefore means, that he was so terrified as to resemble a dead man. And certainly we need not won-

der at this ; for the whole man, so far as relates to the flesh, must be reduced to nothing, that it may be renewed according to God. Whence comes it that men live, that is, imagine that they live, and are swelled with vain confidence in their wisdom or strength, but because they know not God ? Accordingly, until God reveal himself to us, we do not think that we are men, or rather, we think that we are gods ; but when we have seen God, we then begin to feel and know what we are. Hence springs true humility, which consists in this, that a man makes no claims for himself, and depends wholly on God ; and therefore on this point the present and similar passages ought to be carefully studied.

It was customary with the godly fathers, whenever they saw God, to break out into these words : *I am gone ; I am utterly undone.* (Jud. xiii. 22.) Our life, therefore, until our minds earnestly draw near to God, is a vain delusion ; we walk in darkness, and can with difficulty distinguish truth from falsehood ; but when we come into the light it is easy to perceive the difference. So when God draws near to us, he brings light with him, that we may perceive our worthlessness, which we could not formerly see, while we entertained a false opinion of ourselves.

And yet mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts.[1] But does the sight of God bring death to men ? For it appears strange that the sight of God or approach to him should take away life, of which he is the source and giver. I reply that this is an accidental result ; for it takes place through our fault, and not on account of the nature of God. Death is within us ; but we do not perceive it, unless when it is compared with the life of God. This is unquestionably what the Prophet means ; for he does not merely say that he is dead, but assigns the reason, *because he has unclean lips.*

But why does he confine the pollution to the *lips ?* Was he pure in understanding, or in the other parts of the body ? I answer : the Prophet mentions that which he regarded as the most valuable, his tongue, which was consecrated to God ; for God had appointed him to be a Prophet. Even though he was in other respects a sinner, yet because the office

[1] *For mine eyes have seen the king, the* LORD *of hosts.*—Eng. Ver.

which he held was holy, this part of his body was sacred; and as it does not correspond to the divine holiness, he confesses that, even in that part which in itself is more holy, he is *polluted.* Such appears to me to be the true and natural meaning of this passage, in the explanation of which commentators have hitherto been unsuccessful.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. This is added by way of explanation; for he includes himself as an individual in the number of the common people, tainted with that pollution which extends to the whole body, and forgets the purity which he had received from God, because it cannot dwell in his presence. Hence it is evident that they are mistaken who imagine that the Prophet spoke under erroneous views; as the common people are wont to contrive a variety of false notions concerning God. For, as I have said, the presence of God and approach to him is the destruction of our flesh; because it shows that we are nothing in ourselves. When he who is conscious of his wretchedness sees God, what can he expect but destruction? For God is our judge, to whom, we know, nothing is concealed or unknown, in whose sight our purity is impure. And if this happened to the Prophet, what ought we to think of ourselves? For what are we in comparison of him? Even if the LORD hath begun to cleanse us, yet we ought to acknowledge our pollution, the remains of which always continue in our flesh. Hence also we ought to draw a universal doctrine, that the *lips* of all men are impure and *polluted,* till the Lord has cleansed them; from which it also follows, that human doctrines have an uncleanness which betrays them, and that there is nothing pure but what has come from God.

6. *Then flew one of the seraphim to me.* The Prophet shows what kind of relief was brought to him, when he was so terrified as to think that he was a dead man; and this confirms what we have already said, that purity of *lips* comes from God alone; for men can produce nothing of themselves but what is filthy and abominable. If it be objected that it is absurd to say that the Lord now cleansed him, as if his tongue had formerly been impure and profane, though it had

been the instrument employed by the Holy Spirit, I have already replied sufficiently to that objection. The Lord had already cleansed him, but according to his degree. The cleansing which is now added is greater; for it has its enlargements and additions, which no man can obtain all at once.

We must not conclude, therefore, that Isaiah's lips were impure, because they are now cleansed; but we ought to inquire why it is done. It was because the Lord intended to enlarge and extend his favour towards him, and to raise him to higher dignity, that he might have greater influence over the people; and this was rendered necessary by the character of the times, and the change which had taken place in the state.

The fire was *taken from the altar*, to intimate that it was divine or heavenly; for the law forbade any *strange fire* to be brought to it, (Lev. x. 1,) because in sacred things every human mixture is absolute profanation. By this figure, therefore, Isaiah was taught that all purity flows from God alone.

7. *And applying it to my mouth.*[1] We see how God condescends to meet the weakness of human sense. He puts *the tongs* into the hand of a seraph, that by means of it he may take *a coal from the altar* and apply it to the Prophet's mouth. This was, no doubt, done in vision; but by the aid of the outward sign God assisted the Prophet's understanding. There is no reason to believe that the *coal* possessed any virtue, as superstitious persons imagine that in the magical arts there is some hidden power. Nothing of this sort is to be found here; for it is God alone who can cleanse our pollution, in whatever part it exists.

Here the angel administered the cleansing, but was not the author of it; so that we must not ascribe to another what belongs to God alone. This is expressly stated by the angel himself, who claims nothing as his own, but bringing forward the sacred pledge which he had received from God, laid it as a sacrament on the *lips* of the Prophet; not that he could not be cleansed without the *coal*, but because the visible sign was useful for the confirmation and proof of the

[1] *And he laid it upon* (marg., *caused it to touch*) *my mouth.*—Eng. Ver.

fact. And such is the use of sacraments, to strengthen us in proportion to our ignorance; for we are not angels, that can behold the mysteries of God without any assistance, and therefore he raises us to himself by gradual advances.

Lo, this hath touched thy lips. He shows that the confirmation which was obtained by the sign was not without effect, but that the blessing signified by it was at the same time bestowed, so that Isaiah knew that he had not been deceived. Hence we may infer, that in the sacraments the reality is given to us along with the sign; for when the Lord holds out a sacrament, he does not feed our eyes with an empty and unmeaning figure, but joins the truth with it, so as to testify that by means of them he acts upon us efficaciously. And this ought to be the more carefully observed, because there are few persons in the present day who understand the true use of sacraments, and because many godly and learned men are engaged in frequent disputes respecting them.

First of all, we ought to believe that the truth must never be separated from the signs, though it ought to be distinguished from them. We perceive and feel a sign, such as the bread which is put into our hands by the minister in the Lord's Supper; and because we ought to seek Christ in heaven, our thoughts ought to be carried thither. By the hand of the minister he presents to us his body, that it may be actually enjoyed by the godly, who rise by faith to fellowship with him. He bestows it, therefore, on the godly, who raise their thoughts to him by faith; for he cannot deceive.

Unbelievers indeed receive the sign; but because they linger in the world, and do not arrive at Christ's heavenly kingdom, they have no experience of the truth; for he who has not faith cannot raise his thoughts to God, and therefore cannot partake of Christ. Faith alone opens for us the gate of the kingdom of God; and therefore, whoever wishes to eat the flesh of Christ must be carried by faith to heaven beyond human conception. In short, it is the Spirit of God alone who can make us partakers of that fellowship. And yet it does not follow that the unbelief of men takes anything away from the truth of the sacrament, since God al-

ways presents to us a spiritual matter, but wicked men treat it with scorn ; just as the grace of God is offered by the gospel, but all do not receive it, though they actually hear it and are compelled to yield assent to the truth.

Besides, we learn from this passage that the sacraments are never separated from the word. The angel does not here act the part of a dumb man, but, after having given the sign, immediately adds the doctrine, in order to show what was intended by it ; for it would have been no sacrament, if doctrine had not been added, from which Isaiah could learn for what purpose the *coal* was applied to his mouth. Let us therefore learn that the chief part of the sacraments consists in the word, and that without it they are absolute corruptions, such as we see every day in popery, in which the sacraments are turned into stage-plays. The amount of the whole is, that there is nothing to prevent Isaiah, who has been perfectly cleansed, and is free from all pollution from appearing as God's representative.

8. *Afterwards I heard the voice of the Lord.* The Prophet now begins to discourse about the design of this vision why God appeared to him with such glorious majesty, in order to ordain him anew as a prophet. It was because he was called to deliver an incredible message about blinding the Jews. On this revolting occasion, therefore, he is more fully assured of his calling, that he may lay aside fear and obey the command of God ; for nothing gives greater confidence to pious minds than to know that they obey God. He had also another proof, namely, that the Lord had cleansed him ; and this was sufficient to lead him to undertake any task, however difficult.

Whom shall I send ? The Prophet represents the Lord as speaking, as if he could not find a man qualified for such a message. Some think that this is intended to reprove the ignorance of the priests and prophets ; because, though they are very numerous, still not one of them was qualified to teach. This reason carries some probability, but I would rather view it as referring to the certainty of Isaiah's calling as implying that it was not at random, but from choice, that the Lord appointed him. There is here, therefore, a weighty

deliberation whom the Lord will be pleased to send; not that he hesitates, but such modes of expression are used on our account, just as those words, *I will go down and see.* (Gen. xviii. 21.) For God, to whom all things are known, has no need to make any inquiry; but, lest men should think that he acts with precipitation, he thus accommodates himself to the ordinary modes of speaking among men. In like manner, when he asks *whom he shall send,* the meaning is, that he needs not an ordinary person, but a teacher of uncommon excellence on a subject of the greatest importance. Hence we infer that the authority of Isaiah was confirmed, so that he was reckoned to be not only a prophet, but eminent among the prophets.

Who will go for us? I am rather favourable to the opinion that this passage points to Three Persons in the Godhead, just as we elsewhere read, *Let us create man in our likeness.* (Gen. i. 26.) For God talks with himself, and in the plural number; and unquestionably he now holds a consultation with his eternal Wisdom and his eternal Power, that is, with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Here am I. So ready a reply shows how great is that cheerfulness which springs from faith; for he who but lately lay like a dead man dreads no difficulty. Hence we see that the amazement of which we have formerly spoken did not spring from rebellion, in wishing to flee from God, or to refuse the charge which had been laid upon him; but because he needed new grace, that he might know that he would be able to endure the burden. On this account it ought to be observed, that we cannot undertake anything in a proper manner without the evidence of our calling; otherwise we shall pause and hesitate at every step.

Besides, it is a powerful aid to our confidence, when we know that we are not destitute of the necessary gifts, but that God has bestowed them on us, in order that we may be better enabled to discharge our office. Now, this remarkable instance of obedience ought to produce such an effect on our minds that we shall readily and cheerfully undertake any task which he may be pleased to enjoin, and shall never refuse any task, however difficult we may imagine it

to be. When the Prophet says, *Here am I*, the meaning is, that he is ready to obey the commands of God; for this mode of expression is frequently employed in Scripture to denote obedience.

9. *Then he said, Go, and tell that people.*[1] This shows still more clearly how necessary the vision was, that Isaiah might not all at once fail in his course. It was a grievous stumblingblock, that he must endure such obstinacy and rebellion in the people of God, and that not only for a year or two, but for more than sixty years. On this account he needed to be fortified, that he might be like a brazen wall against such stubbornness. The Lord, therefore, merely forewarns Isaiah that he will have to do with obstinate men, on whom he will produce little effect; but that so unusual an occurrence must not lead him to take offence, and lose courage, or yield to the rebellion of men; that, on the contrary, he must proceed with unshaken firmness, and rise superior to temptations of this nature. For God gives him due warning beforehand as to the result; as if he had said, "You will indeed teach without any good effect; but do not regret your teaching, for I enjoin it upon you; and do not refrain from teaching, because it yields no advantage; only obey me, and leave to my disposal all the consequences of your labours. I give you all this information in good time, that the event may not terrify you, as if it had been strange and unexpected." Besides, he is commanded openly to reprove their blind obstinacy, as if he purposely taunted them. "My labours will do no good; but it matters not to me: it is enough that what I do obtains the approbation of God, to whom my preaching will be a sweet smell, though it bring death to you." (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

10. *Harden the heart of this people.*[2] Here the former statement is more fully expressed; for God informs Isaiah beforehand, not only that his labour in teaching will be fruitless, but that by his instruction he will also blind the people, so as to be the occasion of producing greater insensibility and stubbornness, and to end in their destruction.

[1] *And he said, Go, and tell this people.*—Eng. Ver.
[2] *Make the heart of this people fat.*—Eng. Ver.

He declares that the people, bereft of reason and understanding, will perish, and there will be no means of obtaining relief; and yet he at the same time affirms that the labours of the Prophet, though they bring death and ruin on the Jews, will be to him an acceptable sacrifice.

This is a truly remarkable declaration; not only because Isaiah here foretold what was afterwards fulfilled under the reign of Christ, but also because it contains a most useful doctrine, which will be of perpetual use in the Church of God; for all who shall labour faithfully in the ministry of the word will be laid under the necessity of meeting with the same result. We too have experienced it more than we could have wished; but it has been shared by all the servants of Christ, and therefore we ought to endure it with greater patience, though it is a very grievous stumbling-block to those who serve God with a pure conscience. Not only does it give great offence, but Satan powerfully excites his followers to raise a dislike of instruction on the pretence of its being not merely useless, but even injurious; that it renders men more obstinate, and leads to their destruction. At the present day, those who have no other reproach to bring against the doctrine of the gospel maintain that the only effect produced by the preaching of it has been, that the world has become worse.

But whatever may be the result, still God assures us that our ministrations are acceptable to him, because we obey his command; and although our labour appear to be fruitless, and men rush forward to their destruction, and become more rebellious, we must go forward; for we do nothing at our own suggestion, and ought to be satisfied with having the approbation of God. We ought, indeed, to be deeply grieved when success does not attend our exertions; and we ought to pray to God to give efficacy to his word. A part of the blame we ought even to lay on ourselves, when the fruits are so scanty; and yet we must not abandon our office, or throw away our weapons. The truth must always be heard from our lips, even though there be no ears to receive it, and though the world have neither sight nor feeling; for it is enough for us that we labour faithfully for the glory of God,

and that our services are acceptable to him ; and the sound of our voice is not ineffectual, when it renders the world without excuse.

Hence arises a most excellent and altogether invaluable consolation to godly teachers, for supporting their minds against those grievous offences which daily spring from the obstinacy of men, that, instead of being retarded by it, they may persevere in their duty with unshaken firmness. As it is also a general offence, that the lively word of God, at the hearing of which the whole world ought to tremble, strikes their ears to no purpose, and without any advantage, let weak men learn to fortify themselves by this declaration. We wonder how it is possible that the greater part of men can furiously oppose God ; and hence also arises a doubt if it be the heavenly truth of God which is rejected without bringing punishment ; for it can hardly be believed that God addresses men for the purpose of exciting their scorn. That our faith may not fail, we ought to employ this support, that the office of teaching was enjoined on Isaiah, on the condition that, in scattering the seed of life, it should yield nothing but death ; and that this is not merely a narrative of what once happened, but a prediction of the future kingdom of Christ, as we shall find to be stated shortly afterwards.

We ought also to attend to this circumstance, that Isaiah was not sent to men indiscriminately, but to the Jews. Accordingly, the demonstrative particle הנה, (*hinnēh,*) *behold,* is emphatic, and implies that the people whom the Lord had peculiarly chosen for himself do not hear the word, and shut their eyes amidst the clearest light. Let us not wonder, therefore, if we appear to be like persons talking to the deaf, when we address those who boast of the name of God. It is undoubtedly a harsh saying, that God sends a prophet to *close the ears, stop up the eyes, and harden the heart of the people ;* because it appears as if these things were inconsistent with the nature of God, and therefore contradicted his word. But we ought not to think it strange if God punishes the wickedness of men by blinding them in the highest degree. Yet the Prophet shows, a little before, that the blame

of this blindness lies with the people; for when he bids them hear, he bears witness that the doctrine is fitted for instructing the people, if they choose to submit to it; that light is given to guide them, if they will but open their eyes. The whole blame of the evil is laid on the people for rejecting the amazing kindness of God; and hence is obtained a more complete solution of that difficulty to which we formerly adverted.

At first sight it seems unreasonable that the Prophets should be represented as making men's hearts more hardened. They carry in their mouth the word of God, by which, *as by a lamp, the steps of men ought to be guided;* for this encomium, we know, has been pronounced on it by David. (Ps. cxix. 105.) It is not the duty of the Prophets, therefore, to blind the eyes, but rather to open them. Again, it is called *perfect wisdom,* (Ps. xix. 9;) how then does it stupify men and take away their reason? Those hearts which formerly were of brass or iron ought to be softened by it; how then is it possible that it can harden them, as I have already observed? Such blinding and hardening influence does not arise out of the nature of the word, but is accidental, and must be ascribed exclusively to the depravity of man. As dim-sighted people cannot blame the sun for dazzling their eyes with its brightness; and those whose hearing is weak cannot complain of a clear and loud voice which the defect of their ears hinders them from hearing; and, lastly, a man of weak intellect cannot find fault with the difficulty of a subject which he is unable to understand; so ungodly men have no right to blame the word for making them worse after having heard it. The whole blame lies on themselves in altogether refusing it admission; and we need not wonder if that which ought to have led them to salvation become the cause of their destruction. It is right that the treachery and unbelief of men should be punished by meeting death where they might have received life, darkness where they might have had light; and, in short, evils as numerous as the blessings of salvation which they might have obtained. This ought to be carefully observed; for nothing is more customary with men than to abuse the gifts

of God, and then not only to maintain that they are innocent, but even to be proud of appearing in borrowed feathers. But they are doubly wicked when they not only do not apply to their proper use, but wickedly corrupt and profane, those gifts which God had bestowed on them.

John quotes this passage as a clear demonstration of the stubbornness of the Jews. He does not indeed absolutely give the very words, but he states the meaning clearly enough. *Therefore,* says he, *they could not believe, because Isaiah said, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.* (John xii. 39.) True, this prediction was not the cause of their unbelief, but the Lord foretold it, because he foresaw that they would be such as they are here described. The Evangelist applies to the Gospel what had already taken place under the law, and at the same time shows that the Jews were deprived of reason and understanding, because they were rebels against God. Yet if you inquire into the first cause, we must come to the predestination of God. But as that purpose is hidden from us, we must not too eagerly search into it; for the everlasting scheme of the divine purpose is beyond our reach, but we ought to consider the cause which lies plainly before our eyes, namely, the rebellion by which they rendered themselves unworthy of blessings so numerous and so great.

Paul, too, shows from this passage, on more than one occasion, (Acts xxviii. 27; Rom. xi. 8,) that the whole blame of blindness rests with themselves. *They have shut their ears,* says he, *and closed their eyes.* What Isaiah here ascribes to doctrine, Paul traces to the wicked disposition of the nation, which was the cause of their own blindness; and accordingly, I have stated that this was an accidental and not a natural result of the doctrine. In that passage Paul introduces the Spirit as speaking, (Acts xxviii. 25;) but John says that Isaiah spake thus of Christ, *when he had beheld his glory.* (John xii. 41.) From this it is evident, as we formerly said, that Christ was that God who filled the whole earth with his majesty. Now, Christ is not separate from his Spirit, and therefore Paul had good reason for applying this passage to the Holy Spirit; for although God exhibited

to the Prophet the lively image of himself in Christ, still it is certain that whatever he communicated was wholly breathed into him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, however ungodly men may bark against us with their reproaches, that our doctrine ought to bear the blame, because the world is made worse by the preaching of it, they gain nothing at all, and take nothing away from the authority of the doctrine; for they must at the same time condemn God himself and the whole of his doctrine. But their calumnies will not hinder his justice from being displayed, or hinder him from vindicating itself, and at the same time vindicating us.

And when they shall be converted.[1] Here he expressly declares that he did not send the Prophet because he intended to save the people; but, on the contrary, because he intended to destroy them. But the word of God brings salvation; at least some benefit must arise from the preaching of it, that it may do good to some, though many are deprived of the advantage by their own unbelief. I answer, the subject treated of is the whole body, which had already been condemned and devoted to destruction; for there were always some whom the Lord exempted from the general ruin; to them the word brought salvation, and on them it actually produced its proper effect; but the great body of the people were cut off and perished through obstinate unbelief and rebellion. So, then, we perceive that the word of God is never so destructive that there are not a few who perceive that it brings salvation to them, and feel that it does so in reality.

They shall be healed. We ought also to observe from the order and connexion of the words, that the first step of *healing* is repentance. But in the first place, we must understand what he means by the word *healing;* for he uses it in reference to the chastisements which had been inflicted on the people on account of their sins. Now, the cause of all the evils which we endure is our rebellion against God. When we repent, he is reconciled to us, and the rods with which he chastised us are no longer employed. This is our *healing.* And this order ought to be carefully observed, from which it is evident what object the Lord has in view in in-

[1] *And convert.*—Eng. Ver.

viting us to himself, and what is the design of the heavenly doctrine, namely, that we may be *converted.*

This is another part of the Gospel, *Repent ye.* (Matt. iii. 2.) Then, offering reconciliation he holds out remedies for all diseases, not only of the body but of the soul. And such being the eminent advantage derived from the word of God, if we are not reconciled to God as soon as his word sounds in our ears, we have no right to lay the blame on any other, for it rests wholly with ourselves. Indeed, the Prophet here speaks of it as unnatural and monstrous, that, by the doctrine of the word, the native tendency of which is to *heal* and soften, men should become insolent and obstinate and altogether incurable. It is undoubtedly true, that when we are drawn inwardly, (John vi. 44,) it is an extraordinary gift of God, and that the arm of God is not revealed to all, (Isa. liii. 1;) but by this dreadful punishment of obstinate malice, Isaiah intended to teach, that we ought earnestly to beware of despising when God calls.

11. *And I said, How long, O* LORD? Although the Prophets are severe in denouncing the wrath of God against men, yet they do not lay aside human feelings. It is therefore necessary that they sustain a twofold character; for they must proclaim the judgment of God with high and unshaken courage, so that they would rather choose that the world should be destroyed and utterly ruined than that any part of His glory should be taken away. And yet they are not devoid of feeling, so as to be unmoved by compassion for their brethren, whose destruction their office lays them under the necessity of foretelling. These two feelings, though they appear to be inconsistent, are in full harmony, as appears from the instance of Jeremiah, who at first complains of the hard task assigned him of proclaiming destruction to the people, but afterwards revives his courage, and proceeds boldly in discharging the duties of his office. (Jer. i. 6, 17.) Such was also the state of Isaiah's mind; for, being desirous to obey God, he earnestly proclaimed His judgments; and yet he had some regard to the people, which led him to entreat, that if this *blindness* must come upon them, it might not be permanent. There can be no doubt, that when he

thus prayed to God, he was moved with compassion, and desired that so dreadful a punishment should be mitigated.

Natural affections, (στοργαὶ φυσικαὶ,) therefore, ought not to prevent us from performing what is our duty. For instance, there is the natural affection of a husband to a wife, and of a father to a son; but it ought to be checked and restrained, so that we may chiefly consider what is suitable to our calling, and what the Lord commands. This ought to be carefully observed; for when we wish to give loose reins to ourselves, we commonly plead this excuse, that we are willing and ready to do what God requires, but are overpowered by natural affection. But those feelings ought to be restrained in such a manner as not to obstruct our calling; just as they did not hinder the Prophet from proceeding in the discharge of his duty; for to such an extent ought we to acknowledge the authority of the Lord over us, that when he orders and commands, we should forget ourselves and all that belongs to us.

But although the godly anxiety of Isaiah about the salvation of the people is here expressed, still the severity of the punishment is likewise stated, that wicked men may not, as they are wont to do, indulge the hope of some mitigation. Nor can it be doubted that the Prophet was led by a secret impulse from God to ask this, that the stern and dreadful reply which immediately follows might be more fully brought out; from which it is evident what kind of destruction awaits unbelievers, that they will receive no light or moderate punishment, but will be utterly destroyed and cut off.

Until the houses be without man, and the land become a desolation. This is an additional aggravation; for it is possible that countries might be wasted, and yet that one city might remain; that even cities might be stormed and laid desolate, and yet very many houses be left. But here the slaughter, he tells us, will be so great, that not only the cities, but even the very houses will be thrown down, and the whole land will be reduced to frightful and lamentable desolation; though even amidst the heaviest calamities some remnant is still left. Though Isaiah said this but once, yet let us understand that it is also spoken to us; for this punish-

ment has been pronounced against all who obstinately disobey God, or who with a stiff neck struggle against his yoke. The more violent their opposition, the more resolutely will the Lord pursue them till they are utterly destroyed.

12. *Till the Lord have removed men far away.* These words contain nothing new, but merely an explanation of the former verse, and a description by other words of the ruin that shall overtake Judea; namely, that God will send the inhabitants *far away.* He asserts that those who shall survive the war will not be exempted from punishment, for they will be led into captivity. And next he adds a general clause about the desolation of the land; as if he had said that it would be desolate and bereft of inhabitants, because some would flee away, others would be driven into banishment, and others would perish by the sword. Such is the reward prepared for obstinate and rebellious persons, who add crime to crime, till the indignation of God rise to such a height that it cannot be appeased.

13. *Till there shall be in it a tenth.*[1] There is some obscurity in the words; but let us first ascertain the meaning, and then we shall easily find out what is the signification of the words. There are two ways of explaining this passage. Some explain עֲשִׂירִיָה (*ăsīrīyāh*) to mean *decimation;* others make it to mean *a tenth part,* and consider it to be a collective noun. Undoubtedly, the Hebrew word עֲשִׂירִית, (*ăsīrīth,*) and not עֲשִׂירִיָה, (*ăsīrīyāh,*) denotes *a tenth part,* though the difference between them is not great. Those who render it *decimation* think that a truce is promised to the people, because from the reign of Uzziah to the destruction of Jerusalem there would be ten kings; and undoubtedly that is the number of kings, reckoning from Uzziah to Zedekiah. His prophetical doctrine would derive no small support from the circumstance, that he could tell the number of kings who should reign even after his death, and that he described not only the fact itself, but likewise the time, and the day.

Yet I know not if another meaning be not somewhat more appropriate; for the Prophet appears to hold out to the people this consolation, that they will retain some hidden

[1] *But yet in it shall be a tenth.*—Eng. Ver.

vigour, and will be capable of sprouting out, though they may appear for a time to be entirely dead; just as, when the winter is past, the trees renew their foliage. But as the former exposition carries sufficient probability, I shall therefore explain the whole verse according to the opinion of those who think that mention is here made of ten kings, so as to mean that, when the ten kings shall have completed their reign, the people will be carried into captivity, and then, as by a conflagration, the whole land will be consumed.

At the same time, the reader ought to be aware that, whether עֲשִׂירִיָּה (*ăsīrīyāh*) be rendered *a tenth part*, or *decimation*, it may with the utmost propriety be viewed as referring to the people; and then the meaning will be, *Till the people be diminished to a tenth part.* He had formerly spoken of a *remnant*, and a *very small remnant*, (Isa. i. 9,) and afterwards he will speak of it again, (Isa. x. 22;) for it was a very small number that remained. It might therefore be naturally viewed as meaning, that out of a thousand there would be left a hundred; out of a hundred, ten; and out of ten, one.

And shall return. That is, a change will take place for the better: the Jews will return from captivity to their native country, and the land will assume a new aspect. But this may be thought to be somewhat at variance with what follows; for the Prophet immediately adds, *It shall be destruction.* How cold comfort will it yield to the people to be restored, if shortly afterwards they shall be again destroyed! Some commentators solve this difficulty, by supposing that Isaiah spoke about the final destruction of the people. But in my opinion he rather means that the destruction will not be complete, but such as happens to trees, when their leaves fall off in the winter, and nothing appears but dead timber; but when spring returns, they bud forth anew: and so also will this people.

לְבָעֵר (*lĕbāēr*) means *to burn*,[1] and therefore it means here

[1] Bishop Lowth's rendering is, *And though there be a tenth part remaining in it, even this shall undergo repeated destruction;* which accords with CALVIN's view, that the substance of the tree will be left. Bishop Stock renders it *for pasture: But yet in it shall be left a tenth, and it shall recover, and serve for pasture.* He reasons thus: "The verb בער may

that they will be *consumed* by a conflagration: but we ought to read it in connection with the metaphor which immediately follows; for Isaiah does not barely mean that it will be *consumed*, but that it will be consumed *like the teil-tree*, that is, with the hope of immediate recovery. When Jerome rendered it *for exhibition*, I know not on what he supposed that opinion to be founded, if it were not that he made a free translation, looking rather to the meaning than to the etymology of the word; for when trees blossom or put forth leaves, their life is again brought forth and displayed; and this meaning will be very appropriate.

As a teil-tree and an oak. It appears that Isaiah did not select at random those two kinds of trees; for one of them puts forth its leaves, and likewise sheds them, sooner than the other. So it happened to the tribe of Judah; for first the ten tribes, with the half tribe of Benjamin, were carried into captivity; and thus they who were the first to blossom were likewise the first to decay. This tribe was the latest of all in decaying, not without high expectation of blossoming again; for here the hope of deliverance is held out, and this was different from the captivity of the Israelites. There appears, therefore, to be some appropriateness in this metaphor of the trees; but I would not choose to press it very far.

When they cast their leaves. By the phrase, *casting of leaves*, must be understood that *throwing of them down* which takes place when trees are stripped of their leaves as of their garment; for trees, in that state of nakedness, appear to be dry and withered; though there remains in them a hidden vigour, through which they are at length quickened by the returning mildness of the season.

So in it shall be substance. This is the application of the

either signify to *eat grass*, or to *eat it down*. The question is, in which sense it is to be understood here? whether the land is again to yield food to its inhabitants, or to be laid bare and waste? That the former is the true meaning I think very evident, as well from the tendency of the ensuing simile of the oak, which is of the consolatory kind, as because it is the almost constant practice of Isaiah to subjoin to denunciations of divine vengeance a prediction of final reconcilement and happiness." Jarchi, as interpreted by Breithaupt, renders the word, *et erunt in combustionem, (sive depastionem,) and they shall be for destruction, (or for pasture;)* leaving it doubtful which of the above renderings ought to be preferred. —*Ed.*

metaphor, which is exceedingly forcible; for when we see the spiritual grace of God in the very order of nature, we are strongly confirmed. As Paul holds out a likeness of the resurrection in the sowing of corn, which is a daily occurrence, (1 Cor. xv. 36,) so in like manner Isaiah in this passage describes the restoration of the Church, by taking a metaphor from trees, which wither at the end of autumn, but again blossom at the return of spring, and put forth new leaves; which could not happen, did they not retain some vigour during the winter, though to outward appearance they are dead. He foretells that a similar event will happen to this people; so that, although during their hard and oppressive captivity they resemble dry timber, and it may be thought that they can never be delivered, still there will always be preserved in them some vigour, by which they shall be supported amidst those calamities, and shall at length come forth and blossom.

This doctrine, we have said, is not peculiar to a single age, and therefore it ought to be carefully observed; for it frequently happens that the Church, amidst the numerous afflictions which she endures, appears to have no strength, and is supposed to be utterly ruined. Whenever this takes place, let us fully believe that, notwithstanding these appearances, there is still some concealed energy, which, though it be not immediately manifest to our eyes, will at length yield its fruit. That energy lies hidden in the word of the Lord, by which alone the Church is sustained.

The holy seed. He shows what is that *substance*, that it consists of a small number of the godly, whom he calls *the holy seed;* for he means the elect, who would be preserved by the free mercy of God, and thus would survive that captivity. That banishment might be regarded as a cleansing of the Church, by which the Lord took away the ungodly; and when they had been cut off, he collected a people, small in number, but truly consecrated to himself. Some commentators consider this phrase to refer to Christ; but the interpretation appears to be too far-fetched, and it will be more consistent to extend it to all the godly; for *the holy seed is the substance* of the Church.

CHAPTER VII.

1. And it came to pass, in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

1. Accidit in diebus Achaz filii Iotham, filii Usiæ regis Iuda, ut ascenderet Rezin rex Syriæ, et Pecah filius Romeliæ rex Israel, contra Ierusalem, ad oppugnandam eam; sed non potuit expugnare.

2. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

2. Nuntiatum est autem domui David, dicendo, Sociata est Syria cum Ephraim; et commotum est cor ejus, sicuti cùm ligna sylvæ moventur a vento.

3. Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field;

3. Tunc dixit Iehova ad Isaiam, Egredere in occursum Achaz, tu et Sear-jasub filius tuus ad finem aquæductus piscinæ superioris, ad viam agri fullonis.

4. And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

4. Et dices ad eum, Contine et quiesce; non formides, neque mollescat cor tuum propter duas caudas istorum titionum fumigantium, in furore iræ Rezin, et Syri, et filii Romeliæ.

5. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

5. Eo quod consilium contra te iniit Syrus malignum cum Ephraim et filio Romeliæ, dicendo:

6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal:

6. Ascendamus contra Iudam, et excitemus eum, et aperiamus eum nobis; constituamusque in medio ejus Regem, filium Tabeal.

7. Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

7. Sic dixit Dominus Iehova, Non consistet, et non erit.

8. For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

8. Quoniam caput Syriæ, Damascus; et caput Damasci, Rezin. Et quidem adhuc sexaginta quinque anni, et frangetur Ephraim, ut non sit populus.

9. And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

9. Interea caput Ephraim, Samaria; et caput Samariæ, filius Romeliæ. Si non creditis, profecto neque stabitis.

10. Moreover, the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

10. Et adjecit Iehova loqui ad Achaz, dicendo;

11. Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

11. Pete tibi signum a Iehova Deo tuo, petendo in profundo, vel sursum in excelso.

12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14. Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

15. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

17. The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Assyria.

18. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall hiss for the fly that *is* in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria:

19. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

20. In the same day shall the LORD shave with a razor that is hired, *namely*, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep;

22. And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk *that* they shall give, that he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat *that is* left in the land.

23. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall *ven* be for briers and thorns.

24. With arrows and with bows

12. Et ait Achaz, Non petam; et non tentabo Iehovam.

13. Et dixit, Audite nunc domus David; An parum est vobis, hominibus molestos esse, nisi Deo quoque meo sitis molesti?

14. Propterea dabit vobis Dominus ipse signum: Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium; et vocabit nomen ejus Immanuel.

15. Butyrum et mel comedet, donec sciat reprobare malum, et eligere bonum.

16. Et quidem antequam sciat puer rejicere malum et eligere bonum, relinquetur terra quam odisti, a duobus Regibus suis.

17. Adducet Iehova super te, et super populum tuum, et super domum patris tui, dies qui non venerunt a die defectionis Ephraim a Iuda: nempe, Regem Assur.

18. Erit in die illa: Sibilabit Iehova muscæ, quæ est in extremitate fluminum Ægypti, et api quæ est in terra Assur.

19. Venientque, et quiescent omnes in vallibus desertis, et in cavernis petrarum, et in omnibus spinetis, et in omnibus dumetis.

20. In die illa radet Dominus novacula conducta, per hos qui trans fluvium sunt, per Regem Assur, caput et pilos pedum; quin et barbam tollet.

21. Fietque in die illa, ut homo nutriat vaccam armenti et duas oves.

22. Et eveniet, ut propter copiam lactis quam proferent, comedet butyrum. Butyrum certè et mel comedet quisquis residuus fuerit in medio terræ.

23. Erit etiam in die illa, ut quocunque in loco fuerint mille vites, prostent mille argenteis propter spinas et vepres.

24. Cum sagittis et arcu venient

shall *men* come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

25. And *on* all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

illuc; quoniam spinæ et vepres erunt per universam terram.

25. Porrò quòd ad omnes montes qui sarculo fodiuntur, non veniet illuc timor spinarum et veprium; sed expositi erunt bobus, et conculcabuntur a pecoribus.

1. *And it came to pass.* Here is related a remarkable prophecy about the wonderful deliverance of Jerusalem, when it appeared to have been utterly ruined. Now the Prophet explains all the circumstances, that by means of them the miracle may be more fully displayed, and to make it manifest, that not by the wisdom or power of man, but by the favour of God, the city has been preserved. For so ungrateful were the people, that, at the close of this transaction, they would not have understood that they had been delivered by the hand of the Lord, if all the circumstances had not been expressly brought to their remembrance. And, indeed, there were very few persons who, in the hour of danger, ventured to hope what Isaiah promised; because they judged of themselves and of the state of public affairs from present appearances. In order, therefore, to make known the remarkable kindness of God, he enters into all the details, that they may perceive from what danger and from whose hand they have been delivered. Let us also understand that this kindness was conferred on ungrateful men, that the Church might be preserved, and that Christ might afterwards appear.

It ought to be observed that the Prophet speaks of the second war which was fought by *Rezin and Pekah;* and this may easily be inferred from the sacred history; for in the former war Ahaz was vanquished, and a vast multitude were carried into captivity, who were at length restored by the Israelites, when the Prophet, in the name of God, commanded that it should be done. Having again collected an army, (2 Kings xvi. 5,) the kings of Israel and Syria attacked Ahaz, because they thought that he had been worn out by the former war, and had no power to resist. The mention of this second war is intended to show the great-

ness of the miracle; for Ahaz had not strength left to resist so great a multitude, the flower of the whole nation having been swept away by the former war, and such of the people as remained being quite dispirited, and not yet recovered from the terror arising out of their recent defeat. So much the more, therefore, are the goodness and power of God displayed, that, pitying so great distress, he gave assistance to his people, and in a moment rescued them from the jaws of death, when all regarded their condition as hopeless.

Went up. This may be regarded as a statement and summary of the whole transaction; for he mentions the subjects on which he is about to speak, and in the Hebrew modes of expression briefly glances at those matters which he will afterwards explain more fully and at large. From the first he tells the result, that the expedition of the two kings was unsuccessful, and afterwards he will assign the reasons why Jerusalem could not be stormed; but before coming to that, he briefly notices the plan or design of King Ahaz.

2. *And it was told the house of David.* He does not mean that, at the very time when the two kings were approaching to the city, the king received intelligence about the league; for it would not have been safe for Ahaz to go out, when the invading army was spread over the country; but before they had collected their forces, it is said that King Ahaz trembled. Hence there is reason to believe that his consternation became greater when he saw the danger nearer. *The house of David* means the king's palace and court; as if the Prophet had said that Ahaz and his counsellors had been informed about the conspiracy which had been formed against Judea.

As to the words, נחה (*nāchāh*) is variously rendered by interpreters. The signification of this Hebrew word being *to lead*, some draw from it this meaning, "The King of Syria *led* his soldiers to aid the army;" and they think that על (*al*) with ע (*ain*) is put for אל (*al*) with א (*aleph*). Others derive it from נוח (*nūăch*), as if the letter ו (*vau*) were wanting, and render it, *he rested.* According to others, it is rather an inversion of the letters, and נחה (*nāhāh*) is put for

חנה (*chānāh*), which means *to pitch a camp;* and, therefore, they choose to render it, *Syria is confederate.*[1] Nothing else was meant by the Prophet than that a league in war had been formed between the Israelites and the Syrians, that with their united forces they might attack Jerusalem. In the use of the word *Ephraim* there is a figure of speech (synecdoche) very frequent in the Prophets, by which a part is taken for the whole. Under *Ephraim* the whole kingdom of Israel is included, not only because that tribe was superior to the rest in numbers and wealth, but because their first king, Jeroboam, was descended from it. (1 Kings xi. 26.)

And his heart was moved. We see that by *the house of David* is here meant nothing else than "the king's palace," from which the terror spread to the whole nation; and indeed it was impossible but that, when they heard of the alarm of the king and the princes, the body of the people should be moved by the same kind of terror. As soon as this intelligence was received, all were struck with such dread that no man was master of himself. He expresses their trembling by an appropriate metaphor, which is also frequently employed by ourselves, (*Il tremble comme la fueille en l'arbre,*) *he trembles like the leaf of a tree.* The design of this is to heighten the miracle; for we learn from it that not only in the opinion of others, but likewise in their own opinion, their case was desperate. They would therefore have been utterly ruined if the Lord had not seasonably interposed.

This passage sets before us a very bright mirror, in which we may behold the thoughtlessness of the ungodly, when they do not feel the hand of God; and, on the other hand, the fearful trembling with which they are suddenly seized, when the Lord presents to them any danger. In the midst of their prosperity they are so much at their ease that they hardly believe that they are subject to the government of God, and undoubtedly imagine that they are placed beyond the reach of all danger. Adversity stuns them in such a manner that they suddenly fall down, and their senses are

[1] "*Syria is arm in arm with Ephraim;* leans on the arm of the king of Israel, as on that of a friend."—*Stock.*

so entirely overpowered by terror that they lie like people who are lifeless or bereft of their senses. Such is the punishment by which the Lord arouses them from their deep slumber. At first they appear to be firm and immovable, as if nothing could throw them down from their rank; but now, at the slightest noise, they are suddenly seized with trembling. That terror is the righteous vengeance of God, to whom they never do homage until they are compelled.

Let us learn, that if we have any spark of faith, we ought not to distrust God when we are in any danger. It is indeed impossible that we should not be agitated and alarmed when dangers press upon us; but we ought not to tremble so as to be tossed about by our anxiety in every direction, and unable to see a harbour to which we may safely direct our course. There must always be this difference between the fear of the godly and of the ungodly, that the ungodly find no remedy for composing their minds; but the godly immediately betake themselves to God, in whom, knowing that they have a very safe harbour, though they be harassed by uneasiness, still they remain calm.

3. *Then said the* LORD. First, we see how God, remembering his covenant, anticipates this wicked king by sending the Prophet to meet him; for he does not wait for his prayers, but of his own accord promises that he will grant deliverance. *His son Shear-jashub* is joined with the Prophet as a witness of the prediction, and there is reason to believe that his name, *Shear-jashub*, was not given at random, but by the secret inspiration of the Spirit, or by an immediate command of God, and in order to point out the future deliverance of the people. He, therefore, carried in his name what might be regarded as an engraven seal, both of the approaching captivity and of the return. It is also probable that this symbol of the prediction was generally known, for he would not have been joined with his father on any other account than because he bore in his person some authority.

To the way of the fuller's field. The place is mentioned in order to give authenticity to the history. It is possible that the king, for the purpose of repelling the enemy, may have

set out to watch his approach, which appears more clearly from the sacred history. (2 Kings xviii. 17.) It is called *the way of the fuller's field,* perhaps because it was customary to wash clothes there, or because the name arose out of some ancient occurrence. However that may be, it was an evidence of anxiety and dread, that this wretched hypocrite was running about in all directions, when Isaiah came forth to meet him and to soothe his mind.

4. *And thou shalt say to him.*[1] The Hebrew word שָׁמֹר, (*shāmŏr,*) which signifies *to keep,* is here put in the Hiphil;[2] and the greater part of interpreters take it for *beware;* but they erroneously apply this to an unnatural and far-fetched meaning, that Ahaz should *beware of* carrying on war. A more natural meaning is, that he ought not to waver or wander about in uncertainty, but to remain calm and serene. Accordingly, I have rendered it *refrain.* The meaning therefore is, that Ahaz should be composed, and should not be agitated or harass his mind by uneasiness, as fickle and unsteady persons are wont to do when they are struck with terror.

This interpretation is confirmed by the word which follows, *Be quiet;* for these two are connected, first, to keep quiet *watch,* so as not to be distracted by a variety of opinions, or gaze around in all directions; and, secondly, to have a calm and composed mind. Such are the highly delightful fruits which are yielded by faith; for through a variety of attacks unbelievers give way, and wander in uncertainty, and know not to which hand they ought to turn, while believers keep themselves under restraint, and *quietly* betake themselves to God. Ungodliness is never at rest; but where faith exists, there the mind is composed, and does not tremble to an immoderate degree. These words very fitly express the power of faith.

Fear not. After having pointed out the remedy for allaying the distresses of the mind, he likewise bids them *not fear;* for faith, which places our salvation in the hand of

[1] *And say unto him.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] This is an oversight; for הִשָּׁמֵר (*hishshāmēr*) is in the Niphal conjugation.—*Ed.*

God, is not more opposite to anything than to *fear*. It is impossible, I acknowledge, not to *fear* when dangers threaten, for faith does not deprive us of all feeling. On the contrary, the children of God are undoubtedly moved by two kinds of *fear*, one of which arises from the feeling of human nature, even though they be endued with perfect faith. The other arises from the weakness of faith; for no man has made such proficiency as not to have any remains of that distrust against which we ought continually to strive. We must not, therefore, understand the exhortation of the Prophet to mean that the Lord forbids every kind of *fear*, but he enjoins believers to be armed with such firmness as to overcome *fear*. As if he had said, "Do not suffer yourselves to be discouraged; and if you are assailed by fierce and severe attacks, maintain unshaken resolution, that you may not be overpowered by dangers, but, on the contrary, live to God and overcome all your distresses." For the same reason he immediately adds,—

And let not thy heart be faint. To be *faint* means "to melt away," for not without reason does the Apostle exhort us to strengthen our hearts by faith. (Heb. xi. 27; xiii. 9.) It is the softness of indolence, when we forget God and melt away, as it were, through our unbelief. You would not call that man soft or effeminate who relies on the Spirit of God and steadfastly resists adversity. Hence we infer that the Prophet meant nothing else than that Ahaz should undauntedly await the accomplishment of what the Lord had promised to him.

For the two tails. Isaiah employs an elegant metaphor to lessen the conception which the Jews had formed about those two very powerful kings which had filled their minds with terror. Their rage and cruelty appeared to be a devouring fire, which was sufficient to consume the whole of Judea, and could not be quenched. Isaiah, on the other hand, calls them not *firebrands*, (for that might have been thought to be something great,) but *tails*, that is, some fragments or ends of *firebrands*, and these, too, not burning, but only *smoking*, as if some *firebrand* snatched from the fire were going out, and gave out nothing else than a slight

smoke. This metaphor yields high consolation, for it warns us to form a very different opinion about the violence of the ungodly from what it appears to be. One would think that they are endued with so great power that they could burn and destroy the whole world. To put down the excess of terror, the Lord declares that what we imagined to be a burning, and a perpetual burning, is but a slight smoke and of short duration.

5. *The king of Syria hath taken evil counsel against thee.* Though he foretold that empty would be the threats, and vain the attempts of the enemies of the people of God, yet he does not conceal that their devices are cruel, if the Lord do not restrain them. By *evil counsel* he means *destructive counsel*, for these two kings had leagued together to destroy Judea. To express it more fully, and to place it as it were before their eyes, he relates their very words.

6. *Let us go up.* That is, *Let us make an invasion.* נקיצנה (*nekitzennah*) is rendered by some, *Let us distress* or *afflict;* which is also expressed by the derivation of the word. But in this conjugation it rather signifies "to stir up and arouse." Though I do not reject the former interpretation, yet I prefer the latter, because it agrees better with the scope of the passage. Again, I understand the word *arouse* as meaning to *disturb*, and to cause revolutions; as we commonly say, *to raise disturbances*,[1] so as not to allow the tranquillity of that kingdom to be preserved.

Let us open it to us. The following word, נבקיענה, (*nabkignennah*,) is interpreted by some, *Let us break into it.*[2] Others render it, *Let us cause it to break up to us.* I have rendered it, *Let us open;* for בקע (*bakang*) also signifies what we commonly express by the phrase, *to make a breach or opening.*[3] Now, the way to *open* up the entrance to Judea was to rush through its fortifications by the force of arms, or, through the influence of fear, to induce timid and fickle persons to revolt; for so long as they continue to be loyal, entrance cannot be obtained; but when everything is dis-

[1] *Remuer les affaires.*
[2] *Let us make a breach therein for us.*—Eng. Ver.
[3] *Faire bresche ou overture.*

turbed by insurrections, an entrance is made, so that it becomes easy to break through into the strongest and best fortified places.

Thus, these two kings hoped that, as soon as they came into Judea, they would immediately terrify the whole nation by the extent and power of the army, so that there would be no ability or inclination to resist. When they brought together an army so prodigiously numerous, it is not probable that they placed any dependence on a long siege; for Jerusalem was strongly fortified; but they thought that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be terrified and alarmed at the sight of their forces, and would be induced to make an immediate surrender. Yet I leave it to every person to adopt any interpretation of these words that he pleases, for whatever sense be put upon them, the meaning of the Prophet is not doubtful.

The son of Tabeal. Who this *Tabeal* was cannot easily be learned from history. Probably he was some Israelite, an enemy of the house of David, whom those kings were desirous to set up as one of their own dependents.

7. *It shall not stand.* What he had formerly stated was intended to show more fully that the deliverance was great and uncommon; for when the Lord intends to assist us in our trials, he represents the greatness of the danger, that we may not think that he promises less than the necessity requires. He does not usually give a mitigated view of the evils which press upon us, but rather holds out their full extent, and afterwards makes a promise, and shows that he is able to deliver us, though we may appear to be ruined. Such was the method adopted by the Prophet; for he might have told them in plain terms what would happen, and might have encouraged the king and the nation not to be terrified or discouraged at the sight of those armies. But he opened up the scheme and design of those kings, with which he now contrasts the promise and decree of God, that his wonderful assistance may be more strikingly displayed.

This is the sacred anchor which alone upholds us amidst the billows of temptations; for in adversity we shall never be able to stand if God take away his word from us. Al-

though, therefore, the king was almost overwhelmed with despair, Isaiah shows that there is nothing so dreadful that it may not be despised, provided that he fortify himself by the promise of God, and patiently look for that which is not yet seen, and which even appears to be incredible. He affirms, that whatever men attempt, after the manner of the giants, in rising up against God, *it shall not stand.* He uses the word תקום, (*thākūm,*) *shall arise,* in the same sense in which that metaphor is employed in the Latin language, that a work is making progress; and, in a word, he declares that such daring sacrilege *shall not stand.*

Still more emphatic is that which he adds, לא תהיה, (*lō thihyeh,*) *it shall not be;* that is, it shall be reduced to nothing, as if it had never existed. This mode of expression deserves notice, for it was the bare and naked word of God which was contrasted with the vast army and scheme of the kings.

8. *For the head of Syria is Damascus.* As if he had said, "Those two kings shall have their limits, such as they have them now. They aspire to thy kingdom; but I have set bounds to them which they shall not pass." *Damascus* was the metropolis of *Syria,* as Paris is of France. He says, therefore, that those kings ought to be satisfied with their possessions, and that their future condition would be the same as it then was.

And Ephraim shall be broken. After having said that it is now useless to attempt to extend their boundaries, he foretells the calamity of the kingdom of Israel; for by the word *broken* he means that the kingdom of Israel shall be annihilated, so that it shall no longer exist. The Israelites were carried into captivity, and incorporated with another nation, just as in our own time a part of Savoy has passed under the government of France, and has lost its name. This is what the Prophet means, when he says מעם, (*mēgnām,*) *that it be not a people;* for at that time Israel was mixed with foreign nations, and its peculiar name was blotted out.

Within sixty-five years. The Israelites were led into captivity in the sixth year of King Hezekiah, and Ahaz reigned not more than sixteen years; and, therefore, it is certain

that this calculation ought not to be made from the day on which Isaiah was sent to deliver this message, for it was only twenty years to the time when the ten tribes were carried into captivity. Amoz had prophesied of that captivity; and there can be no doubt that this prophecy of Amoz, (iii. 11,) and the time specified in it were generally known, and that all understood the reckoning of the number of years. If, therefore, we reckon from the time when Amoz makes this prediction, we shall find it to be *sixty-five years;* for Jotham reigned sixteen years, (2 Kings xv. 33;) Ahaz as many, (2 Kings xvi. 2;) to those must be added six years of King Hezekiah, which brings us down to the year when the ten tribes were carried into captivity; and if we afterwards add twenty-seven years, during which Uzziah reigned after the publication of the prophecy, there will be *sixty-five years.* This conjecture is highly probable; and there ought not to be any doubt that this was Isaiah's meaning; for there is a prediction of the Prophet Amoz, in which the Lord warned the people that they might not meet with anything unexpected, and complain that they had been overtaken suddenly. Isaiah confirms that prediction, and announces the same time which already was universally known.

Moreover, by these words he sharply reproves the thoughtlessness of the Israelitish nation, that, when they had been warned of the destruction of their country and their name, not only did they freely indulge in despising the judgment of God, but as if they had purposely intended to mock at the heavenly predictions, they opened their mouth to devour Judea; for a long period was already past, and they thought that they had escaped. The Prophet ridicules this madness, in imagining that the word of God grew old in so small a number of years. But because the Israelites were deaf, Isaiah assigns to the Jews a time when they may look for the destruction of their enemies. Now, this passage shows that the Prophets faithfully assisted each other, that by their united labours they might serve God.

9. *Meanwhile*[1] *the head of Ephraim is Samaria.* As it is a repetition by which he confirms what he formerly said,

[1] AND *the head of Ephraim.*—Eng. Ver.

that God had set bounds to the kingdom of Israel for an appointed time, I have rendered the copulative ו, (*vau,*) *meanwhile.* Otherwise, it would have been absurd to say that the metropolis of the kingdom would be preserved, after that the kingdom had been destroyed, as he lately foretold. The meaning therefore is, "In the meantime, till the *sixty-five years* are fulfilled, Israel enjoys a kind of truce. His *head* shall be *Samaria.* Let him be satisfied with his boundaries, and not aim at anything beyond them; for such shall be his condition, until he be utterly destroyed, and be no longer reckoned to be *a people.*"

If you do not believe. The particle כי (*ki*) is placed in the middle of the sentence, to mark the reason or cause; and, therefore, some render it, "*If you do not believe,* the reason is, that you are not believers." They limit the former clause to the prophecy of Isaiah, but extend the latter to any part of the word of God, as if he had said, "If you have no faith in my sayings, this gives a general proof of your unbelief." But in that way, the verb תאמינו, (*thăămīnū,*) which is in Hiphil conjugation, will not differ from the verb תאמנו, (*thēāmēnū,*) which is in the Niphal. It is not without reason, however, that the Prophet has changed the termination; and, from many passages of Scripture, it is abundantly evident that the Hebrew verb אמן, (*āmăn,*) in the Niphal conjugation, signifies *to stand,* or, *to remain fixed in its condition.* I interpret it, therefore, as if he had said, "This is the only support on which you can rely. Wait calmly and without uneasiness of mind for what the Lord has promised, that is, deliverance. If you do not wait for it, what else remains for you than destruction?"

The particle כי, (*ki,*) therefore, as in many other instances, means *truly;* for he declares that they cannot stand, if they do not rely on the promise; and indirectly he expresses still more, that God will stand, though they disbelieve his word, and, as far as lies in their power, endeavour to destroy its stability; but that they will not stand, unless they rely on the promise which has been made to them.

Hence we ought to draw a universal doctrine, that, when we have departed from the word of God, though we may

suppose that we are firmly established, still ruin is at hand. For our salvation is bound up with the word of God, and, when this is rejected, the insult offered to it is justly punished by him who was ready to uphold men by his power, if they had not of their own accord rushed headlong to ruin. The consequence is, that either we must believe the promises of God, or it is in vain for us to expect salvation.

10. *And Jehovah added to speak to Ahaz.*[1] As the Lord knew that King Ahaz was so wicked as not to believe the promise, so he enjoins Isaiah to confirm him by adding a sign; for when God sees that his promises do not satisfy us, he makes additions to them suitable to our weakness; so that we not only hear him speak, but likewise behold his hand displayed, and thus are confirmed by an evident proof of the fact. Here we ought carefully to observe the use of signs, that is, the reason why God performs miracles, namely, to confirm us in the belief of his word; for when we see his power, if we have any hesitation about what he says to us, our doubt is removed by beholding the thing itself; for miracles added to the word are seals.

11. *Either in the deep.* I understand it simply to mean, *Either above or below.* He allows him an unrestricted choice of a miracle, to demand either what belongs to earth or what belongs to heaven. But perhaps in the word *deep* there is something still more emphatic; as if he had said, "It belongs to you to choose. God will immediately show that his dominion is *higher* than this world, and that it likewise extends to all *depths*, so that at his pleasure he can raise the dead from their graves." It was undoubtedly astonishing forbearance towards this wicked king and people of God, that not only did he patiently bear their distrust for a time, but so graciously condescended to them that he was willing to give them any pledge of his power which they chose. Yet he had in his eye not unbelievers only, but he intended likewise to provide for the benefit of the weak, in whom there was a seed of godliness; that they might be fully convinced that Isaiah did not speak at random, for he could easily give a proof of the power of God in confirmation of what he had said.

[1] *Moreover, the* LORD *spake again to Ahaz.*—Eng. Ver.

The same goodness of God is now also displayed towards men, to whom he exercises such forbearance, when he might justly have been offended at them; for how shockingly do they insult God, when they doubt his truth? What do you leave to God, if you take that from him? And whatever may be our doubts, not only does he pardon us, but even aids our distrust, and not only by his word, but by adding miracles; and he exhibits them not only to believers, but also to the ungodly, which we may behold in this king. And if he was at that time so kind to strangers, what ought not his own people to expect from him?

12. *And Ahaz said.* By a plausible excuse he refuses the sign which the Lord offered to him. That excuse is, that he is unwilling *to tempt the* LORD; for he pretends to believe the words of the Prophet, and to ask nothing more from God than his word. Ungodliness is certainly detestable in the sight of God, and in like manner God unquestionably sets a high value on faith. Accordingly, if a man rely on his word alone, and disregard everything else, it might be thought that he deserves the highest praise; for there can be no greater perfection than to yield full submission and obedience to God.

But a question arises. Do we *tempt God,* when we accept what he offers to us? Certainly not. *Ahaz* therefore speaks falsehood, when he pretends that he refuses the sign, because he is unwilling to *tempt God;* for there can be nothing fitter or more excellent than to obey God, and indeed it is the highest virtue to ask nothing beyond the word of God; and yet if God choose to add anything to his word, it ought not to be regarded as a virtue to reject this addition as superfluous. It is no small insult offered to God, when his goodness is despised in such a manner as if his proceedings towards us were of no advantage, and as if he did not know what it is that we chiefly need. We know that faith is chiefly commended on this ground, that it maintains obedience to him; but when we wish to be too wise, and despise anything that belongs to God, we are undoubtedly abominable before God, whatever excuse we may plead before men. While we believe the word of God, we ought not to despise

the aids which he has been pleased to add for the purpose of strengthening our faith.

For instance, the Lord offers to us in the gospel everything necessary for salvation; for when he brings us into a state of fellowship with Christ, the sum of all blessings is truly contained in him. What then is the use of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Must they be regarded as superfluous? Not at all; for any one who shall actually, and without flattery, acknowledge his weakness, of which all from the least to the greatest are conscious, will gladly avail himself of those aids for his support. We ought indeed to grieve and lament, that the sacred truth of God needs assistance on account of the defect of our flesh; but since we cannot all at once remove this defect, any one who, according to his capacity shall believe the word, will immediately render full obedience to God. Let us therefore learn to embrace the signs along with the word, since it is not in the power of man to separate them.

When *Ahaz* refuses the *sign* offered to him, by doing so he displays both his obstinacy and his ingratitude; for he despises what God had offered for the highest advantage. Hence also it is evident how far we ought to *ask signs*, namely, when God offers them to us; and therefore he who shall reject them when offered, must also reject the grace of God. In like manner fanatics of the present day disregard Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and consider them to be childish elements. They cannot do this without at the same time rejecting the whole gospel; for we must not separate those things which the Lord has commanded us to join.

But a question may be asked, Is it not sometimes lawful to *ask signs* from the Lord? For we have an instance of this in Gideon, who wished to have his calling confirmed by some *sign*. (Judges vi. 17.) The Lord granted his prayer, and did not disapprove of such a desire. I answer, though Gideon was not commanded by God to ask a sign, yet he did so, not at his own suggestion, but by an operation of the Holy Spirit. We must not abuse his example, therefore, so that each of us may freely allow himself that liberty; for so great is the forwardness of men that they do not hesitate to ask

innumerable signs from God without any proper reason. Such effrontery ought therefore to be restrained, that we may be satisfied with those signs which the Lord offers to us.

Now, there are two kinds of *signs;* for some are extraordinary, and may be called supernatural; such as that which the Prophet will immediately add, and that which, we shall afterwards see, was offered to Hezekiah. (Isa. xxxviii. 7.) Some are ordinary, and in daily use among believers, such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which contain no miracle, or at least may be perceived by the eye or by some of the senses. What the Lord miraculously performs by his Spirit is unseen, but in those which are extraordinary the miracle itself is seen. Such is also the end and use of all *signs;* for as Gideon was confirmed by an astonishing miracle, so we are confirmed by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, though our eyes behold no miracle.

13. *And he said, Hear now, O house of David.* Under the pretence of honour to exclude the power of God, which would maintain the truth of the promise, was intolerable wickedness; and therefore the Prophet kindles into warmer indignation, and more sharply rebukes wicked hypocrites. Though it would have been honourable to them to be reckoned the descendants of David, provided that they imitated his piety, yet it is rather for the sake of reproach that he calls them the *posterity* or *family of David.* It was indeed no small aggravation of the baseness, that the grace of God was rejected by that family from which the salvation of the whole world would proceed. Grievous disgrace must have been brought on them, by naming their ancestry, from which they had so basely and shamefully degenerated.

This order ought to be carefully observed; for we ought not to begin with severe reproof, but with doctrine, that men may be gently drawn by it. When plain and simple doctrine is not sufficient, proofs must be added. But if even this method produce no good effect, it then becomes necessary to employ greater vehemence. Such is the manner in which we hear Isaiah thundering on the present occasion. After having exhibited to the king both doctrine and signs he now resorts to the last remedy, and sharply and severely

reproves an obstinate man; and not him only, but the whole royal family which was guilty of the same kind of impiety.

Is it a small thing for you to weary men? He makes a comparison between *God* and *men;* not that it is possible to make an actual separation between *God* and the prophets and holy teachers of whom he speaks, who are nothing else than God's instruments, and make common cause with him, when they discharge their duty; for of them the Lord testifies, *He who despiseth you despiseth me. He who heareth you heareth me.* (Luke x. 16.) The Prophet therefore adapts his discourse to the impiety of Ahaz, and of those who resembled him; for they thought that they had to deal with *men.* Those very words were undoubtedly spoken in ancient times which we hear at the present day from the mouths of the ungodly: "Are they not men that speak to us?" And thus they endeavour to disparage the doctrine which comes from God. As it was customary at that time for irreligious despisers of doctrine to use the same kind of language, the Prophet, by way of admission, says that those who performed the sacred office of teaching the word were *men.* "Be it so. You tell me that I am a mortal man. That is the light in which you view the prophets of God. *But is it a small thing to weary* us, if you do not also *weary God?* Now, you despise God, by rejecting the sign of his astonishing power which he was willing to give to you. In vain therefore do you boast that you do not despise him, and that you have to do with *men,* and not with *God.*" This then is the reason why the Prophet was so greatly enraged. Hence we see more clearly what I mentioned a little before, that the proper season for giving reproofs is, when we have attempted everything that God enjoined, and have neglected no part of our duty. We ought then to break out with greater vehemence, and to expose the ungodliness which lurked under those cloaks of hypocrisy.

My God. He formerly said, *Ask a sign for thee from the* LORD THY GOD; for at that time his obstinacy and rebellion had not been manifestly proved. But now he claims it as

peculiar to himself; for *Ahaz*, and those who resembled him, had no right to boast of the name of God. He therefore intimates that God is on his side, and is not on the side of those hypocrites: and in this way he testifies his confidence; for he shows how conscientiously he promised deliverance to the king; as if he had said, that he did not come but when God sent him, and that he said nothing but what he was commanded to say. With the same boldness ought all ministers to be endued, not only so as to profess it, but to have it deeply rooted in their hearts. The false prophets also boast of it loudly, but it is empty and unmeaning talk, or a blind confidence arising from rashness.

14. *Therefore the* LORD *himself shall give you a sign.* Ahaz had already refused the sign which the Lord offered to him, when the Prophet remonstrated against his rebellion and ingratitude; yet the Prophet declares that this will not prevent God from *giving the sign* which he had promised and appointed for the Jews. But what sign?

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. This passage is obscure; but the blame lies partly on the Jews, who, by much cavilling, have laboured, as far as lay in their power, to pervert the true exposition. They are hard pressed by this passage; for it contains an illustrious prediction concerning the Messiah, who is here called *Immanuel;* and therefore they have laboured, by all possible means, to torture the Prophet's meaning to another sense. Some allege that the person here mentioned is Hezekiah; and others, that it is the son of Isaiah.

Those who apply this passage to Hezekiah are excessively impudent; for he must have been a full-grown man when Jerusalem was besieged. Thus they show that they are grossly ignorant of history. But it is a just reward of their malice, that God hath blinded them in such a manner as to be deprived of all judgment. This happens in the present day to the papists, who often expose themselves to ridicule by their mad eagerness to pervert the Scriptures.

As to those who think that it was Isaiah's son, it is an utterly frivolous conjecture; for we do not read that a deliverer would be raised up from the seed of Isaiah, who

should be called *Immanuel;* for this title is far too illustrious to admit of being applied to any man.

Others think, or, at least, (being unwilling to contend with the Jews more than was necessary,) admit that the Prophet spoke of some child who was born at that time, by whom, as by an obscure picture, Christ was foreshadowed. But they produce no strong arguments, and do not show who that child was, or bring forward any proofs. Now, it is certain, as we have already said, that this name *Immanuel* could not be literally applied to a mere man; and, therefore, there can be no doubt that the Prophet referred to Christ.

But all writers, both Greek and Latin, are too much at their ease in handling this passage; for, as if there were no difficulty in it, they merely assert that Christ is here promised from the Virgin Mary. Now, there is no small difficulty in the objection which the Jews bring against us, that Christ is here mentioned without any sufficient reason; for thus they argue, and demand that the scope of the passage be examined: "Jerusalem was besieged. The Prophet was about to give them a sign of deliverance. Why should he promise the Messiah, who was to be born five hundred years afterwards?" By this argument they think that they have gained the victory, because the promise concerning Christ had nothing to do with assuring Ahaz of the deliverance of Jerusalem. And then they boast as if they had gained the day, chiefly because scarcely any one replies to them. That is the reason why I said that commentators have been too much at their ease in this matter; for it is of no small importance to show why the Redeemer is here mentioned.

Now, the matter stands thus. King Ahaz having rejected the sign which God had offered to him, the Prophet reminds him of the foundation of the covenant, which even the ungodly did not venture openly to reject. The Messiah must be born; and this was expected by all, because the salvation of the whole nation depended on it. The Prophet, therefore, after having expressed his indignation against the king, again argues in this manner: "By rejecting the promise, thou wouldest endeavour to overturn the decree of God; but it shall remain inviolable, and thy treachery and ingratitude

will not hinder God from being continually the Deliverer of his people; for he will at length raise up his Messiah."

To make these things more plain, we must attend to the custom of the Prophets, who, in establishing special promises, lay down this as the foundation, that God will send a Redeemer. On this general foundation God everywhere builds all the special promises which he makes to his people; and certainly every one who expects aid and assistance from him must be convinced of his fatherly love. And how could he be reconciled to us but through Christ, in whom he has freely adopted the elect, and continues to pardon them to the end? Hence comes that saying of Paul, that *all the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen.* (2 Cor. i. 20.) Whenever, therefore, God assisted his ancient people, he at the same time reconciled them to himself through Christ; and accordingly, whenever famine, pestilence, and war are mentioned, in order to hold out a hope of deliverance, he places the Messiah before their eyes. This being exceedingly clear, the Jews have no right to make a noise, as if the Prophet made an unseasonable transition to a very remote subject. For on what did the deliverance of Jerusalem depend, but on the manifestation of Christ? This was, indeed, the only foundation on which the salvation of the Church always rested.

Most appropriately, therefore, did Isaiah say, "True, thou dost not believe the promises of God, but yet God will fulfil them; for he will at length send his Christ, for whose sake he determines to preserve this city. Though thou art unworthy, yet God will have regard to his own honour." King Ahaz is therefore deprived of that sign which he formerly rejected, and loses the benefit of which he proved himself to be unworthy; but still God's inviolable promise is still held out to him. This is plainly enough intimated by the particle לָכֵן, (*lāchēn,*) *therefore;* that is, because thou disdainest that particular sign which God offered to thee, הוּא, (*hū,*) *He* that is, God himself, who was so gracious as to offer it freely to thee, he whom thou *weariest* will not fail to hold out a *sign.* When I say that the coming of Christ is promised to Ahaz, I do not mean that God includes him among the

chosen people, to whom he had appointed his Son to be the Author of salvation; but because the discourse is directed to the whole body of the people.

Will give you a sign. The word לכם, (*lāchĕm,*) *to you,* is interpreted by some as meaning *to your children;* but this is forced. So far as relates to the persons addressed, the Prophet leaves the wicked king and looks to the nation, so far as it had been adopted by God. He will therefore give, not *to thee* a wicked king, and to those who are like thee, but *to you* whom he has adopted; for the covenant which he made with Abraham continues to be firm and inviolable. And the Lord always has some remnant to whom the advantage of the covenant belongs; though the rulers and governors of his people may be hypocrites.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. The word *Behold* is used emphatically, to denote the greatness of the event; for this is the manner in which the Spirit usually speaks of great and remarkable events, in order to elevate the minds of men. The Prophet, therefore, enjoins his hearers to be attentive, and to consider this extraordinary work of God; as if he had said, "Be not slothful, but consider this singular grace of God, which ought of itself to have drawn your attention, but is concealed from you on account of your stupidity."

Although the word עלמה, (*gnălmāh,*) *a virgin,* is derived from עלם, (*gnālăm,*) which signifies *to hide,* because the shame and modesty of *virgins* does not allow them to appear in public; yet as the Jews dispute much about that word, and assert that it does not signify *virgin,* because Solomon used it to denote a young woman who was betrothed, it is unnecessary to contend about the word. Though we should admit what they say, that עלמה (*gnălmāh*) sometimes denotes *a young woman,* and that the name refers, as they would have it, to the age, (yet it is frequently used in Scripture when the subject relates to *a virgin,*) the nature of the case sufficiently refutes all their slanders. For what wonderful thing did the Prophet say, if he spoke of *a young woman* who *conceived* through intercourse with a man? It would certainly have been absurd to hold out this as a *sign*

or a miracle. Let us suppose that it denotes a young woman who should become pregnant in the ordinary course of nature;[1] everybody sees that it would have been silly and contemptible for the Prophet, after having said that he was about to speak of something strange and uncommon, to add, *A young woman shall conceive.* It is, therefore, plain enough that he speaks of *a virgin* who should conceive, not by the ordinary course of nature, but by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. And this is the mystery which Paul extolls in lofty terms, that *God was manifested in the flesh.* (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

And shall call. The Hebrew verb is in the feminine gender, *She shall call;* for as to those who read it in the masculine gender, I know not on what they found their opinion. The copies which we use certainly do not differ. If you apply it to the mother, it certainly expresses something different from the ordinary custom. We know that to the father is always assigned the right of giving a name to a child; for it is a sign of the power and authority of fathers over children; and the same authority does not belong to women. But here it is conveyed to the mother; and therefore it follows that he is conceived by the mother in such a manner as not to have a father on earth; otherwise the Prophet would pervert the ordinary custom of Scripture, which ascribes this office to men only. Yet it ought to be observed that the name was not given to Christ at the suggestion of his mother, and in such a case it would have had no weight; but the Prophet means that, in publishing the name, *the virgin* will occupy the place of a herald, because there will be no earthly father to perform that office.

Immanuel. This name was unquestionably bestowed on Christ on account of the actual fact; for the only-begotten Son of God clothed himself with our flesh, and united himself to us by partaking of our nature. He is, therefore, called *God with us,* or *united to us;* which cannot apply to a man who is not God. The Jews in their sophistry tell us that this name was given to Hezekiah; because by the hand of Hezekiah God delivered his people; and they add, "He who is the servant of God represents his person." But neither

[1] Quæ ex coitu viri gravida esset futura.

Moses nor Joshua, who were deliverers of the nation, were so denominated; and therefore this *Immanuel* is preferred to Moses and Joshua, and all the others; for by this name he excels all that ever were before, and all that shall come after him; and it is a title expressive of some extraordinary excellence and authority which he possesses above others. It is therefore evident that it denotes not only the power of God, such as he usually displays by his servant, but a union of person, by which Christ became God-man. Hence it is also evident that Isaiah here relates no common event, but points out that unparalleled mystery which the Jews labour in vain to conceal.

15. *Butter and honey shall he eat.* Here the Prophet proves the true human nature of Christ; for it was altogether incredible that he who was God should be born of *a virgin.* Such a prodigy was revolting to the ordinary judgment of men. To hinder us from thinking that his fancy now presents to us some apparition, he describes the marks of human nature, in order to show, by means of them, that Christ will actually appear in flesh, or in the nature of man; that is, that he will be reared in the same manner that children commonly are. The Jews had a different way of rearing children from what is followed by us; for they used *honey,* which is not so customary among us; and to this day they still retain the custom of causing a child to taste *butter and honey,* as soon as it is born, before receiving suck.

That he may know. That is, until he arrive at that age when he can distinguish between good and evil, or, as we commonly say, *till the years of discretion;* for ל (*lamed*) denotes the term and period up to which he shall be reared after the manner of a child; and this contributes still more to prove the reality of his nature. He therefore means *understanding* and *judgment,* such as is obtained when the period of childhood is past. Thus we see how far the Son of God condescended on our account, so that he not only was willing to be fed on our food, but also, for a time, to be deprived of *understanding,* and to endure all our weaknesses. (Heb. ii. 14.) This relates to his human nature, for it can-

not apply to his Divinity. Of this state of ignorance, in which Christ was for a time, Luke testifies when he says, *And he grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and with man.* (Luke ii. 52.) If Luke had merely said that Christ *grew,* he might have been supposed to mean *with men;* but he expressly adds, *with God.* Christ must therefore have been, for a time, like little children, so that, so far as relates to his human nature, he was deficient in understanding.

16. *Before the child shall know.* Many have been led into a mistake by connecting this verse with the preceding one, as if it had been the same child that was mentioned. They suppose that it assigns the reason, and that the particle כִּי (*ki*) means *for.*[1] But if we carefully examine the Prophet's meaning, it will quickly be apparent that he leaves the general doctrine, to which he had made a short digression, and returns to his immediate subject. After having founded the hope of the preservation of the city on the promised Mediator, he now shows in what way it will be preserved.

The child. I interpret this word as referring, not to Christ, but to all children in general. Here I differ from all the commentators; for they think that the demonstrative ה points out a particular child. But I view הַנַּעַר, (*hannagnar,*) so that ה is indeed added for the purpose of making it more definite, but is intended to point out the age, and not any particular child; as when we say, *The child,*[2] and add the article *The*[3] for the purpose of giving greater definiteness. This is very customary in Scripture. If he had pointed out a particular child, he would have added הַזֶּה, (*hazzeh,*) as is frequently done in other passages. It is not probable that this promise of the overturn of the kingdoms of Syria and Samaria, which immediately followed, would be deferred for five hundred years, that is, till the coming of Christ; and, indeed, it would have been altogether absurd. The meaning therefore is, *Before the children, who shall be born hereafter,*

[1] Bishops Lowth and Stock concur in rendering כִּי (*ki*) *for,* which indeed is its ordinary meaning. For *before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.—Ed.*

[2] *L'enfant.* [3] *Le.*

can distinguish between good and evil, the land which thou hatest shall be forsaken.

The land. By *the land* I understand Israel and Syria; for though they were two, yet on account of the league which had been formed between the two kings, they are accounted one. Some understand by it Judea; but that cannot agree on account of the plural noun which follows, *her kings.* That these things happened as they are written may be easily inferred from the sacred history; for when Ahaz called the Assyrians to aid him, *Rezin* was slain by them. (2 Kings xvi. 9.) Not long afterwards, Pekah, king of Israel, died, in the twelfth year of King Ahaz, and was succeeded by Hoshea, the son of Elah. (2 Kings xv. 30; xvii. 1.) Thus, before the children who should afterwards be born were grown up, both countries would be deprived of their kings; for before that time both Rezin and Pekah were removed out of the land of the living. Now the discourse is addressed to Ahaz, and God promises to him, by way of consolation, that he will inflict punishment on the enemies of Ahaz, but for no other purpose than to render him more inexcusable.

Which thou hatest. As to the word *hatest,* Syria and the land of Israel are said to be *hated* or *abhorred* by King Ahaz, because from that quarter he was attacked by invading armies. He therefore promises that those kings will soon perish. Some render מִפְּנֵי, (*mippenei,*) *on account of;*[1] and I admit that this word is generally used in this sense. But I adopt here a more natural rendering, as if he had said, *It shall be forsaken from the face* or *from the presence of the two kings,* and shall be left by them, so that they shall no more be seen. And by these words it is sufficiently evident that this must be understood as referring to both kingdoms.

17. *The* LORD *shall bring upon thee.* Here the Prophet, on the other hand, threatens the wicked hypocrite, who pretended that he was unwilling *to tempt God,* and yet called for those whom the Lord had forbidden him to call to his aid. (Exod. xxiii. 32.) That he might not indulge in un-

[1] "*At whose kings thou dost fret.* אתה קץ מפני, (*attāh kāz mippĕnēi,*) thou art fretting by reason of. See Exodus i. 12."—*Bishop Stock.*

due exultation and insolence on account of the former promise, he likewise threatens his destruction, and declares that what he hopes to be his preservation, that is, the aid of the Assyrians, will be utterly destructive to him. (2 Kings xvi. 7; 2 Chron. xxviii. 16.) As if he had said, "Thou promisest everything to thyself from the king of Assyria, and thinkest that he will be faithful to thee, because thou hast entered into a league and covenant with him, which God had forbidden; but thou shalt quickly understand of what advantage it will be to thee to have *tempted God.* Thou mightest have remained at home and at ease, and mightest have received the assistance of God; but thou choosest rather to call in the Assyrians. Thou shalt find them to be worse than thine own enemies."

This discourse, therefore, agrees with what goes before; for he presses more closely the treachery and ingratitude of the king, who had rejected both the word of God and the sign, and had rendered himself unworthy of every promise. And as it is customary with hypocrites, when they have escaped from any danger and fear, immediately to return to their natural disposition, he affirms that nothing shall protect the Jews from being likewise involved in just punishments. He expressly declares that *the family of David,* which might have claimed exemption on the ground of its peculiar privilege, will be exposed to the same kind of calamities; for God regulates his judgments in such a manner, that while he spares his Church and provides for her permanent existence, he does not permit the wicked, who are mingled with the good, to escape unpunished.

From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah. In this manner does Scripture speak when it describes any serious calamity; for the Jews could not have received a severer chastisement than when, by the withdrawing of the ten tribes, (1 Kings xii. 16,) not only was the kingdom wretchedly divided, but the body of the nation was rent and torn. The revolt of *Ephraim from Judah* was, therefore, an indication of the worst kind of calamity; for the resources of the kingdom of Judah being more seriously affected by that division than it could have been by any defeat by a foreign

enemy, he says that since that time the Jews had not sustained a greater calamity.

Hence, as I have already said, we see how God, while he punishes hypocrites, at the same time remembers believers, and opens the way for his mercy. We ought to observe this wonderful arrangement, that amidst the most dreadful deaths still the Church remains safe. Who would ever have thought that Jerusalem would be delivered from the vast army of the two kings? Or, that the kingdom of Syria, which was then in a flourishing condition, would quickly be overturned? Or, that Samaria was not far from destruction? And in the mean time, that the Assyrians, on whom the Jews relied, would do them more injury than the Israelites and Syrians had ever done? All these things the Lord did for the sake of preserving his Church, but at the same time in such a manner that he likewise took vengeance on the wickedness of King Ahaz.

18. *And it shall be in that day.* The Jews thought that the Assyrians were bound by their league with them; but the Prophet ridicules this folly, and declares that they will be ready at God's bidding to drive them in any direction that he thinks fit. Yet instead of command he employs the metaphor *hiss*, in allusion to the climate of those kingdoms of which he speaks; for Egypt abounds in flies, because the country is hot and marshy; and when the air is both hot and moist, there must be produced a great abundance of flies. Assyria, on the other hand, abounded in bees; and when he says that he will bring them by a *hiss*, he alludes to the natural habits of bees and flies, but he means that he will find no difficulty in sending them. As if he had said, "There will be no need of great exertion; for as soon as I shall give the sign, they will instantly run." In this manner he shows what efficacy belongs to his secret operation or design, that by a *hiss* he compels the most powerful nations to yield obedience.

19. *And they shall come.* He follows out the same metaphor; for bees commonly seek nests for themselves in caverns, or valleys and bushes, and such like places; as if he had said that there would not be a corner in which the

enemy would not settle down and dwell. It is unnecessary to give ourselves much trouble in explaining why he speaks of *bushes* and *thorns* rather than of other things, for the language is figurative. And yet I have no doubt that he intended to state, that whether they hide themselves in caverns, or seek concealment in valleys, there will be no escape; for the enemy will take possession of the whole country.

Hence we again infer what has been formerly observed, that nothing takes place at random or by chance, but that everything is governed by the hand of God. Again, though wicked men may rage and may be hurried forward in blind attack, still God puts a bridle on them that they may promote his glory. Therefore, when we see that wicked men throw everything into disorder, let us not think that God has laid the bridle on their neck, that they may rush forward wherever they please; but let us be fully convinced that their violent attacks are under control. From this we ought to derive wonderful consolation amidst those disturbances in which the Christian world is so deeply involved, and by the violence of which it is so powerfully shaken, that almost everything appears to be in a state of confusion. We should consider that the Lord has a concealed bridle by which he restrains furious beasts, so that they cannot break through wherever the madness of their rage drives them, or go beyond the limits which the Lord prescribes to them.

20. *The* LORD *will shave with a hired razor.* He now employs a different metaphor, and compares those enemies by whom the Lord had determined to afflict Judea at the appointed time, to *a razor*, by which the *beard* and *hair* are shaved, and other excrescences of the same kind are removed. ב (*beth*) is here superfluous, and is only employed in accordance with the Hebrew idiom, to denote an instrument, and, therefore, I have merely rendered it *he will shave with a razor.* What he means he immediately explains; namely, that *the Assyrians* will serve for *a razor* in the hand of God, and that they will come from a distant country.

Who are beyond the river. This means that Euphrates will not hinder them from passing over to execute the commands of God. He likewise adds, that it will not be some portion

of that nation rushing forward of its own accord into foreign territories, or wandering without a settled leader; but that the king himself will lead them, so that the nation and the king at the same time will overwhelm Judea, and it will sink under such a burden.

A hired razor. It is not without reason that he says that this *razor* is *hired;* for he expresses by it the dreadful nature of the calamity which would be brought upon them by the Assyrians. If a man make use of a *hired* horse or a *hired* sword, he will use it the more freely, and will not spare or take care of it as he would do with his own, for men wish to gain advantage from what they have *hired* to the full value of the *hire.* Thus the Lord threatens that he will not at all spare the *razor,* though he should be under the necessity of blunting it, which means, that he will send the Assyrians with mad violence and rage. If the Lord took such dreadful vengeance on the Jews for those reasons which the Prophet formerly enumerated, we ought to fear lest we be punished in the same manner; or rather, we ought to dread the *razor* with which he has already begun to shave us.

The head and the hair of the feet. By *the hair of the feet* he means the lower parts; for by *the feet* is meant all that is below the belly, and it is a figure of speech, by which a part is taken for the whole.[1] In short, he means that the whole body, and even the beard, must be shaved. Now, if we set aside the figures, and wish to get at the plain and natural meaning, it is as if he had said, that this *shaving* will reach from the top of the head down to the feet, and that kings and princes will not be exempted from that calamity, but that they also must feel the edge of the *razor.*

21. *And it shall come to pass on that day.* In these verses, down to the end of the chapter, the Prophet describes the state of a country torn and wasted; for he intends to present a striking and lively picture of such overwhelming distress that, wherever you turn your eyes, nothing is to be seen but the traces of frightful desolation. Some think that a mitigation of punishment is here promised, but we

[1] Unde et aquam pedum urinam vocant; et pedes tegere pro alvum exonerare.

shall soon see that this does not agree with the context. Though he employs the appellation, *a man*, without any limitation, yet strictly it is of the richest men that he speaks; for he does not say that every one will have so many; but they who formerly were accustomed to rear a large number of *oxen* and *sheep* will be satisfied with having a few. He means, therefore, that all will be reduced to very deep poverty. Some think that the Hebrew word which the Prophet employs, יחיה, (*yĕchaiyĕh*,) *he shall quicken*, means "to deliver from death;" but the meaning which I have adopted is more natural and more generally approved.

22. *On account of the abundance of milk.* Some explain it thus: "there will scarcely be as much obtained from one cow as would be required for the food of a family;" for those who rear cattle do not feed on milk alone, but likewise make cheeses, and have butter to sell. When, therefore, he says, that out of all their abundance nothing more would be produced than what was necessary for the use of the family, in the opinion of those commentators it denotes poverty. Others think that this is a promise of fertility, that however small may be the number of their cows and sheep, still they will have abundant means of support. A third exposition is preferable; for it appears as if the Prophet intended to show that the *men* will be so few in number that a small quantity of milk will be sufficient for them all; and it is a far heavier affliction that a country should want inhabitants than that it should have a small supply of herds and flocks.

In the preceding verse Isaiah declared, that Judea would be so impoverished, that very few herds and flocks would be left; but now he adds that the men will be still fewer, for a very little milk will be sufficient for the inhabitants of the land. I adopt this exposition the more readily, because here a promise would be inappropriate. The former sense is forced; and he does not speak only of cattle-feeders who had cows, but of all the inhabitants; for he expressly says, *Every one that shall be left*, and by that expression he again denotes the smallness of their number. His statement, therefore, is intended to show, that the country will be so

generally forsaken and so miserably wasted, that no great supply of *milk* and *butter* will be needed ; for, when the devastation has taken place, there will be few men left.

23. *A thousand vines.* As to the opinion of those who think that Isaiah here comforts believers, I pass it by without refutation ; for it is sufficiently refuted by the context, and the words plainly declare that Isaiah continues to threaten destruction, and to describe the desolation of the land. Others think that the meaning is this, *Where a thousand vines were, which were sold for a thousand pieces of silver, there briers and thorns will be found.* But it is plain that this would be far too low a price, if the statement were applied to the whole country ; for who would think of reckoning a shekel to be the price of *a vine*, which is the most precious of all possessions ? It is of the same import with a common expression, " to sell for a trifle," *to give away for a piece of bread ;*[1] when anything is sold at a very low price. Any field, however barren or uncultivated, might be sold at a higher price, if due attention were paid to the cultivation of land, as is usually done where there is a crowded population.

On account of briers and thorns. He assigns a reason for the alteration of the price, which makes it evident that he speaks of desolation. *On account of briers and thorns,* says he ; for there will be none to cultivate the land, which usually happens when a heavy calamity has been sustained. ל, (*lamed,*) which some render *to* or *for*, means, I think, *on account of ;* for, everything having been thrown into confusion by the fury of the invading army, there are no vine-dressers or labourers, and the most highly cultivated lands must have been covered over and choked up by *briers and thorns.* The meaning therefore is, that the inhabitants will be so few, that you will scarcely find any one that would give the smallest coin to buy the most valuable estates.

24. *With arrows and bow shall they come thither.* The verb יָבֹא, (*yābō,*) *he shall come,* is in the singular number ; but it ought to be explained by the plural, that the archers will march through Judea. Some think that Isaiah speaks

[1] *Bailler pour une piece de pain.*

of *bows and arrows,* because such would be the dread of enemies, that no man unarmed would venture to approach his possessions. But I consider it to be more probable that the Prophet means that, where the richest cultivation formerly existed, opportunity for hunting will be found; for there the wild beasts have their dens. Now, it is a most wretched change, when fields formerly cultivated and fertile are turned into woods and thickets. By *bow and arrow* here, therefore, I understand *hunting,* in this sense: "it shall not be approached by husbandmen but by hunters, and they shall not plant or dress vines, but chase wild beasts." In short, it means nothing else than frightful desolation, which shall change the aspect of the land.

25. *And on all the hills that are dug with the hoe.* Here the Prophet appears to contradict himself; for, having hitherto spoken of the desolation of the land, he now describes what may be called a new condition, when he says that, where *thorns and briers* were, there oxen will feed. The consequence has been, that some have applied these words to the consolation of the people. But the intention of the Prophet is totally different; for he means that *hills,* which were at a great distance from a crowded population, and which could not be approached without much difficulty, will be fit for pasturage, on account of the great number of men who go thither; that is, because men will betake themselves to desert mountains, which formerly were inaccessible, there will be no need to be afraid of *briers,*[1] for there will be abundance of inhabitants. Now, this is a most wretched state of things, when men cannot escape death but by resorting to *thorns and briers;* for he means *hills* formerly desolate and uncultivated, in which men shall seek a residence and abode, because no part of the country will be safe. Thus he describes a distressful and melancholy condition of the whole country, and destruction so awful that the aspect of the country shall be altogether different from what it had formerly been.

[1] "The shepherds shall be under no apprehension of finding on those hills hedges of *brier and thorn,* to interrupt the free range of their flock."—*Rosenmüller.*

When he foretold these things to King Ahaz, there can be no doubt that Ahaz despised them; for that wicked king, relying on his forces and on his league with the Assyrians, settled, as it were, on his lees, as soon as the siege of the city was raised. But Isaiah was bound to persevere in the discharge of his office, in order to show that there was no help but from God, and to inform the wretched hypocrite, that his destruction would come from that quarter from which he expected his preservation.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Moreover, the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahar-shalal-hash-baz.

2. And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3. And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son: then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahar-shalal-hash-baz:

4. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

5. The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

6. Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

7. Now therefore, behold, the LORD bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, *even* the king of Assyria, and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks.

8. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach *even* to the neck: and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

1. Et dixit Iehova ad me: Sume tibi volumen grande, et scribi in eo stylo vulgari, (*vel, hominis:*) Accelera ad diripiendum, festina ad prædam.

2. Et adhibui mihi testes fideles, Uriam sacerdotem, et Zachariam filium Iebarachiæ.

3. Et accessi ad prophetissam, quæ concepit, et peperit filium. Dixitque mihi Iehova: Voca nomen ejus, Accelera ad diripiendum; festina ad prædam.

4. Sanè antequam sciat puer clamare, Pater mi et mater mea, tolletur substantia Damasci, et spolia Samariæ, coram Rege Assyriæ.

5. Rursus loquutus est mecum Iehova, iterum dicens:

6. Quandoquidem rejecit populus iste aquas Siloe, quæ fluunt cum silentio, et gaudium fuit illi ad Rezin, et filium Romeliæ.

7. Ideo, ecce Dominus adducit super eos aquas fluvii, violentas et magnas: nempe Regem Assyriæ et omne robur ejus; ascendetque super omnes rivos, et transibit super omnes ripas ejus.

8. Et trajiciens in Iudam inundabit, et transibit, pertinget usque ad collum. Et implebit extensio alarum ejus latitudinem terræ tuæ, O Immanuel.

9. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

10. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God *is* with us.

11. For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

12. Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let* him *be* your fear, and *let* him *be* your dread.

14. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me, *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

19. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

21. And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

9. Consociate vos populi, et confringemini; auribus percipite quotquot è longinqua terra estis. Accingite vos, et confringemini; accingite, inquam, vos, et confringemini.

10. Consultate consilium, et dissolvetur; decernite decretum, et non stabit; quia nobiscum Deus. (*Hebraicè, Immanuel.*)

11. Nam sic dixit mihi Iehova, tanquam apprehensione (*vel, roboratione*) manus; et erudivit me, ne irem per viam populi hujus, dicens:

12. Ne dicatis, Conspiratio, in quibuscunque populus iste dicit, Conspiratio, neque timorem eorum timueritis, aut formidaveritis.

13. Iehovam exercituum ipsum sanctificate; et sit ipse timor vester; et idem sit pavor vester.

14. Tum ipse erit in sanctuarium; in lapidem offendiculi; et in petram ruinæ, duabus domibus Israel; in laqueum, et tendiculum incolæ Ierusalem.

15. Et impingent multi inter eos; ideoque corruent, et conterentur, irretientur, et capientur.

16. Liga contestationem; obsigna legem inter discipulos meos.

17. Itaque expectabo Iehovam, qui abscondit faciem suam a domo Iacob, et præstolabor eum.

18. Ecce ego et pueri, quos dedit mihi Iehova, in signa et prodigia in Israel; a Iehova exercituum, qui habitat in monte Sion.

19. Quòd si dixerint vobis, Sciscitamini à pythonicis et divinis, qui mussitant et demurmurant; annon populus Deum suum consulet, à vivis ad mortuos?

20. Ad legem et testimonium. Si non loquuti fuerint secundum verbum hoc, ideo nempè quod nihil est lucis.

21. Tum per hanc terram transibunt oppressi et famelici. Et accidet ut cùm esurierint, irritentur, ac maledicant regi suo, Deo suo, attollentes sursum faciem.

22. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and *they shall be* driven to darkness.

22. Et quum spectaverit ad terram, ecce tribulatio et tenebræ, caligo, angustia, et ad obscuritatem impulsus.

1. *And Jehovah said to me.*[1] This prophecy contains nothing new, but is a confirmation of the preceding one, in which Isaiah predicted the approaching desolation of the kingdom of Israel and Syria. He had foretold that both countries would be deprived of their kings, before the children who should soon afterwards be born could distinguish between good and evil, that is, before they were grown up. (Is. vii. 16.) But because the wicked are not terrified by any threatenings, it was therefore necessary that this prediction should be repeated and demonstrated by some outward sign.

First, in order more effectually to arouse the nation, God commands that this prophecy be made publicly known by writing, that it may be understood by all. We have formerly said,[2] that it was the custom of the Prophets, after having been enjoined to deliver any message to the people, to sum up in a few words the substance of what they had said, and to affix it to the gates of the temple; as may be learned from Habakkuk ii. 2; for if that passage be compared with the present, the matter will be sufficiently obvious. But here something peculiar is expressed; for God does not merely command him to *write* the prophecy, but demands *a great and large roll*, in order that it may be read at a distance. The smaller the writing is, it is the more obscure, and can with greater difficulty be read. To the same purpose is what immediately follows, *with the pen of a common man*,[3] for אֱנוֹשׁ (*enosh*) denotes any man of ordinary rank; and the meaning is, that not even the most ignorant and uneducated persons may be unable to read the writing.

Make speed to spoil, hasten to the prey.[4] This concise

[1] *Moreover, the* LORD *said unto me.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] See the Author's Preface, page xxxii.

[3] *With a man's pen.*—Eng. Ver. Our Author's version is, *Write on it with a common pen*, and his marginal reading is, *or, with the pen of a man.*—*Ed.*

[4] Our translators have not translated these words, but have left them nthe form of the original Hebrew, *Maher-shalal-hash-baz.* Their mar-

brevity is more emphatic than if he had made a long discourse; for any one could carry home four words, and perceive in them the swiftness of the wrath of God, and be truly and deeply affected by the judgment of God, as if it had been pointed out with the finger. In short, God determined that he should not waste words, because there was no time for controversy, but that he should represent the matter by an outward sign. The Prophets having so frequently, and without any good effect, threatened vengeance, he gave a striking exhibition of it by an example, that it might make a deeper impression on their minds, and be engraven on their memory. As often as these words מהר שלל חש בז (*Maher-shalal-hash-baz*) were mentioned, they would recall to their remembrance the destruction of Israel and Syria, and would make them more certain of it.

Isaiah having prophesied about the coming of Christ in the former chapter, (Is. vii. 14,) many improperly explain this also as relating to the same subject, that, endued with heavenly power, he came to spoil *the prince of this world*, (John xii. 31,) and therefore *hastened to the prey*. This ingenuity is pleasing enough, but cannot at all harmonize with the text; for the true and natural view of the context shows that in this passage the Prophet brings forward nothing that is new, but supports what he had formerly said.

2. *And I took unto me witnesses.* The noun עדים, (*gnēdīm*,) and the verb אעיד, (*āgnid*,) which the Prophet employs, are derived from the same root, and the allusion is elegant, as if we were to say, "I have called-to-witness witnesses."[1] As this was a matter of great importance, he therefore *took*

ginal reading is, "Heb. *In making speed to the spoil he hasteneth the prey*, or, *make speed*," &c. "To the next word מהר, (*maher*,) the prefix ל (*lamed*) shews," says Bishop Stock, "that it is an inscription; as in Ezek. xxxvii. 16, *Write on it* ליהודה ולבני ישראל (*lihudah vēlibnē Israel*) (τὸ) *this inscription*, Judah and the sons of Israel. MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ means, *Hasteneth the spoil! soon cometh the prey*."—*Ed.*

[1] The Latin language afforded to our Author an exceedingly successful imitation of the Hebrew phrase, "*Contestatus sum testes*." It is readily acknowledged that the turn of expression adopted by the translator is much less felicitous; but it is hoped that it will aid the judgment, though it may fail to gratify the taste, of the English reader.—*Ed.*

to himself witnesses, as is usually done on important occasions.

Faithful witnesses. He calls them *faithful,* that is, true and worthy of credit; and yet one of them was an ungodly and worthless apostate, who, wishing to flatter his king, erected an altar resembling the altar at Damascus, and openly defended ungodliness and unlawful modes of worship. Some commentators, I am aware, are of opinion that it was a different person; but a careful examination of the circumstances will convince any one, that this was the same *Urijah,* of whom the sacred history declares that he was slavishly devoted to the ungodliness and lawless desires of the king. (2 Kings xvi. 11.) As to those who think that it was a different person, because Isaiah here calls this man *faithful,* such an argument carries little weight; for the Prophet did not look at the man, but at the office which he held, and which rendered him a fit person for bearing testimony. Accordingly, he does not mean that he was a good and excellent man, but that his office gave him such influence that nobody could reject him, and that his testimony was, as they say, free from every objection.

Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. I think that this prophecy was affixed to the gates of the temple, *Uriah and Zechariah* having been *taken* to be *witnesses;* for he does not speak of a vision, but of a command of God, which he actually obeyed, in order that these words, like a common proverb, might be repeated by every person.

3. *And I approached to the prophetess.* What follows happened to the Prophet, I have no doubt, by a vision, for the purpose of sealing the former prediction. The vision given to Isaiah was, that he had a child by his wife, and was enjoined to give him this name. There would, indeed, be no absurdity in admitting that the Prophet actually had a son by his wife, and gave him this name; and I shall not eagerly dispute with any one who is of that opinion. But as it is not probable that this name was given to any man, and as there is no evidence to prove it, I am more disposed to think that this was a vision exhibited to the Prophet, in order to confirm the former prediction. He calls his wife a

prophetess, not in the same sense in which the wives of kings, for the sake of showing them respect, are called queens, but because in this vision she sustained a public character.[1]

4. *Truly before the child have knowledge to cry.* This is an interpretation both of the dark saying and of the vision which was added to it; for although God did not intend to speak in direct language, still it was proper that obscurity should be removed. I interpret הַנַּעַר, (*hannagnar,*) *the child,* to mean not the Prophet's son, but rather all who should be born soon afterwards. He declares that, before they are grown up, the two kings of Israel and Samaria[2] will be destroyed.

Before the face of the king of Assyria. That is, at the disposal, or at the will, *of the king of Assyria;* alluding perhaps to an ancient custom of carrying the spoils of the enemies *before* the chariot of those who received a public triumph. In like manner shall the spoils of Samaria and Damascus be carried *before the king of Assyria.*

This makes it still more evident that the Prophet intended nothing else than to foretell the desolation of the kingdom of Israel and of Syria. He does this for the purpose of comforting the godly, and likewise of holding up to scorn the foolish dread of the wicked king, who could not endure that the Lord should assist him; for he rejected not only the promises, but likewise the sign which was offered. In consequence of this, the Prophet goes farther and farther in reproving his wickedness, and that of the whole nation. "Thou dost, indeed, believe nothing, but the Lord will assist his own; and thou shalt quickly see sudden and unexpected changes, by which the Lord will deliver his people." And yet these words were spoken not so much to the king as to godly men; and hence we ought to infer that the servants of God do not always speak so as to be believed by their hearers; for Isaiah here addresses wicked men, in whom he produces no conviction. Why, then, does he speak

[1] Nec dubium est, quin animos piorum à libidinoso coitu data opera abducere voluit Isaias, ut ad sacrum mysterium attenti forent. Et certè quamvis in conjugio, &c.

[2] It is evident that, by a slip of the pen, *Samaria* is put for *Syria.—Ed.*

to them? To convict them more and more of their unbelief, and to reprove them for it; and next, to render the goodness of God more manifest: for who would not have thought that such aggravated wickedness would entirely shut the door against the mercy of God? And yet the Lord, by his goodness, rises superior to the wickedness both of the king and of the people. The object of the Prophet therefore is, to reprove the ungodly for their rebelliousness, and at the same time show that God is always like himself.

6. *Because this people hath despised* (or, *disdained*[1]) *the waters of Shiloah.* That Ahaz may not slumber in unfounded expectation, the Prophet all at once breaks off his discourse about the general safety of the godly, and next threatens punishment on unbelievers. Some think that he speaks against those who wished for revolutions; as it frequently happens that the multitude are not satisfied with their present condition, and desire to have a new king. Those who are diseased often expect that, by a change of place, they will be in better health. So perverse is the will of men, that when matters do not go to their wish, they look for a change of their condition, snatch at it eagerly, and hope to obtain from it some relief.

But I think that the Prophet's meaning is more extensive, and does not apply to those only who desired a change; but that the discourse is general, and includes all ranks; for impiety and contempt of God almost universally prevailed, and he does not speak of a few persons, or of a particular party, but of the great body of the nation. I confess, indeed, that he excepts a few persons, servants of God, who will afterwards be mentioned; but that does not prevent the remonstrances of Isaiah from being directed against the whole nation; for since almost all were corrupted, he justly reproves them all. The offence is, that the people, distrusting their own weakness, sought increased wealth and increased forces. He says, therefore, that they *despised the waters of Shiloah*, because the Jews *despised* and *disdained* their condition.

[1] The former word occurs in the version, and the latter at the exposition.—*Ed.*

And their joy was to Rezin and Remaliah's son.[1] Some render it WITH *Rezin*, but the preposition *to* expresses more fully the perverse desire. He means that the Jews, perceiving that they had not strong fortresses, looked in another direction, and longed for the wealth of the kingdom of Israel. Beholding their small number and their poverty, they trembled, and placed no confidence in God, but only in outward assistance, and thought that they would be perfectly safe, if they had as powerful a king as the Israelites had. Thus they *rejoiced* in the riches of others, and in longing for them.

7. *Therefore, behold.* He speaks in the present tense, that all may attend more closely: *Behold, the* LORD *bringeth violent waters.* We must attend to the metaphors which the Prophet employs, for the style is much more elegant than if it had been naked and unadorned. "It is as if he had said, Because the people are not satisfied with their condition, and desire the riches of others, I will show them what it is to have a powerful king." For instance, if a small nation, whose king was mean and little esteemed, had powerful neighbours over whom an illustrious king reigned, and said, "How delightful would it be to serve that prosperous king, to be the subjects of the emperor, or of the kings of France; for their power is irresistible!" would not God justly punish such an unlawful desire? The more powerful that kings are, the more grievously do they oppress their people; there is nothing which they will not attempt, they do everything according to their caprice. Besides, they know no limit to their power, and in proportion to their strength they indulge with less restraint. The Lord reproves that mad desire of the Jews, in not being satisfied with their condition, and in looking, not to the Lord, but to the resources of powerful kings; and this reproof is far more graceful under these metaphors than if he had spoken in plain and direct language.

Shiloah, as Jerome tells us, was a small fountain, from which flowed a little river that ran gently through the midst of Jerusalem. That narrow river yielding them little pro-

[1] *And rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son.—Ed.*

tection, they therefore distrusted it, and desired to have those great rivers by which cities are usually defended and greatly enriched; for there is nothing by which a country is more enlarged or more rapidly enriched, than by those large and navigable rivers, which render it easy to import and export merchandise of every description. He therefore compares Euphrates, which was the most celebrated river in all the East, to *Shiloah*, and pursues the same metaphor, meaning by those rapid waters of the river the Assyrians, who would destroy the whole of Judea, and would waste it like a deluge. (2 Kings xviii. 13, 17.) "I will show," saith the Lord, "what it is to desire those rapid and violent waters."

And he shall come up. This passage ought to be carefully observed; for we all have a distrust that may be called natural to us, so that, when we see ourselves deprived of human assistance, we lose courage. Whatever God may promise, we cannot at all recover ourselves, but keep our eyes fixed on our nakedness, and sit like bewildered persons in our fear; and therefore we ought to seek a cure for this fault. *Shiloah*, therefore, that is, the calling or lot which God has assigned to us accompanied by a promise, though we do not see it with our eyes, ought to be our defence, and we should prefer it to the highest power of all the kings in the world. For if we rely on human aid, and place our strength in large forces and abundance of wealth, we must look for the punishment which is here threatened by the Prophet.

The sacred history assures us that these things were fulfilled, so that any one who shall read the history will not need a lengthened exposition of this passage; for the Assyrians, whom the Jews called to their assistance, destroyed them. This was the just punishment of their distrust; and we see in it a striking instance of the wicked greediness of men, who cannot be satisfied with the promise and assistance of God.

From this destruction of the Jews let us learn to attend to our own interests. The Church is almost always in such a condition as to be destitute of human aid, lest, if we were

too largely furnished, we should be dazzled by our wealth and resources, and forget our God. We ought to be so well satisfied and so highly delighted with our weakness as to depend wholly on God. The small and gentle waters should be more highly valued by us than the large and rapid rivers of all the nations, and we ought not to envy the great power of the ungodly. Such is the import of what is written in the Psalms: *The streams of the river shall make glad the city of God, the sanctuary of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; God will help her before the dawn. Let the heathen rage, let the kingdoms be moved, and let the earth melt when the sound is uttered. Jehovah of armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.* (Ps. xlvi. 4-7.)

If it be objected that we ought not to reject human aid, the answer is easy. The Prophet does not condemn human aid, but he condemns that wicked fear by which we are thrown into distrust, and tremble, so that no promise of God can keep us within reasonable bounds. Now, we ought to render to God this honour, that though all things else should fail, we shall be satisfied with him alone, and shall be convinced that he is at hand. And in that case it matters little whether we have or have not outward assistance; if we have it, we are at liberty to use it; if we have it not, let us bear the want of it with patience, and let God alone suffice us for all that we need; for he will be able to execute his promises, since he has no need of any outward aid. Only let us trust entirely to his power and defence.

8. *And crossing over into Judah.* The verb חלף, (*chălăph,*) which sometimes signifies *to pass through*, here means to *attack* and *cut off:* that is, it will not only water Judea, but will overflow it, so as utterly to drown it; for it will spread far and wide on every part. He adds—

Even to the neck. The comparison is taken from a man who, entering a river, dips into it gradually, till the water reaches *to the neck.* In this manner shall Judea be overflowed by that rapid river, that is, by the Assyrian, till he be plunged up *to the neck.* He means Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of the country; and when the Assyrian came to it, Judea was at no great distance from destruction.

The breadth of thy land. That is, in all directions; for he pursues his metaphor in his prophecy, and shows how violent the Assyrian will be, and enlarges the representation of his strength and violence by the same comparison; that is, by comparing him to an impetuous river, which, bursting through its barriers and overflowing its banks, spreads far and wide, and overturns and destroys everything by its violence. He proceeds in his discourse against the Jews, as he had begun to do in the two former verses; for, having foretold the destruction of the Israelites and Syrians, he likewise threatens that the Jews, in their turn, shall be punished for their unbelief.

To understand this better, Isaiah's highly beautiful and closely connected discourse must be examined. First, he turned aside to address others; for Ahaz was unworthy of being addressed. *The* LORD *will give you a sign;* which was declared in the former chapter. Next, he adds the manner of preserving Jerusalem, by the sudden changes which should take place in Syria and Samaria. This was confirmed, in the beginning of this chapter, both by a commandment and by a vision. He now comes to the Jews themselves, that they may not hope to escape without being punished, or be too highly elated by the destruction of their enemies; for he declares that for them also a reward is prepared, and that they, too, will be punished for their wickedness and treachery, because they despised the Lord, and would not rest satisfied with his promises, and signs, and acts of kindness largely and bountifully offered.

O Immanuel. It may be asked, Why does the Prophet direct his discourse to Christ, instead of simply calling the land "God's holy land?" For there can be no doubt that by the name *Immanuel* he means Christ. It might be thought that this expression was used in order to express the disgrace more strongly; for, since Judea not only was set apart to God, but in the person of the Mediator had God as the guardian of its safety, it was disgraceful that it should be destroyed by a heathen king. But I rather think that the Prophet added this name, in order to hold out to good men some remnant of hope, and to comfort them in so great a calamity; for, when the country was wasted and cruelly

torn, they might have lost courage. He therefore means, that that desolation would not prevent the coming of the Redeemer, of whom he had formerly spoken. As if he had said, "Nevertheless, the land shall be thine, O Immanuel; in it shalt thou have thy residence and abode." This was, therefore, added instead of a consolation, in order to intimate that the land, though torn and wasted, belongs to God and not to men. The sudden change to a direct address (ἀποστροφὴ) is emphatic; for in this way the Prophet solemnly declares his belief in redemption, that the Lord may set a limit to the frightful calamities.

9. *Associate yourselves.* The verb רעו, (*rōgnū,*) whether it be derived from רוע (*rūăng*) or from רעה, (*rāgnāh,*) signifies *to bruise.* But as רעה (*rāgnāh*) signifies *to associate,* some prefer taking it in this sense, which certainly agrees better with the scope and argument of the Prophet. Some render it, *Bruise ye,* that is, *bruise* the kingdom of Judah, or, *bruise* the Assyrians; but this appears to be unnatural or far-fetched. That it describes the plans and undertakings by which they endeavoured to crush the Church of God, is evident from its being immediately added, and a second time repeated, by the Prophet, *Gird you,* that is, "Form a plan." The word *associate,* therefore, is the most suitable, unless, perhaps, it be thought preferable to take the verb רעו (*rōgnū*) metaphorically; and I willingly favour that opinion, so as to make it mean *to heap up;*[1] for those things which are *bruised* must of necessity be violently pressed and squeezed together. He therefore means not only *gathering together,* but likewise *pressing closely together;* as if he had said, "Draw close to one another, as if you were a dense mass." This meaning agrees beautifully, I think, with the scope of this passage; for to the same purpose is what he immediately adds, "Arm yourselves, *Gird you.*"

The Prophet rises into confidence after having mentioned *Immanuel,* that is, God, who would assist his people; and at the same time cherishes increased hope in opposition to

[1] The Author illustrates it by a word borrowed from his own vernacular, *entasser,* which, like the Latin verb *coacervare,* signifies to *heap up,* or *gather into heaps.—Ed.*

enemies, that though it might be thought that they had gained their object when they had depopulated the country, still the Lord would be victorious, and would preserve his people against the cruelty of their enemies. Withdrawing his mind, therefore, from the sight of that calamity, he turns to Christ, and, by contemplating him, acquires such courage that he ventures to taunt his enemies as if he had vanquished them. We must view the Prophet as on a watch-tower, from which he beholds the distressed condition of the people, and the victorious Assyrians proudly exulting over them. Refreshed by the name and the sight of Christ, he forgets all his distresses, as if he had suffered nothing; and, freed from all his wretchedness, rises against the enemies whom the Lord would immediately destroy. This ought to be carefully observed; that, as we have still to contend against the same temptations amidst those afflictions which the Church endures, and by the weight of which it is almost overwhelmed, we may direct our eyes to Christ, by the sight of whom we shall be able to triumph over Satan and over enemies of every description.

Ye peoples.[1] Why does he call them עַמִּים, (*gnammim,*) *peoples,* when it was the Assyrian only that would lay waste Judea? I reply, the army of the Assyrian was composed of various *peoples;* for he had subdued not only the Chaldeans, but many other *peoples;* and, accordingly, that monarchy consisted of various nations. Yet the Prophet might refer to the Israelites, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, and to all others who were enemies of the Church of God; for he does not speak of one stroke inflicted on the Church, but of the incessant contests which the chosen people had continually to endure. But in order to understand this better, we must join with it the following verse, at the end of which we find the words *for Immanuel,* that is, *for God is with us;* for this is the security for our deliverance. Let men league together, and contrive, and form plans and determinations, they will not be able to accomplish anything; *for there is no counsel against the* LORD, (Prov. xxi. 30;) and therefore we must begin with this foundation, if we wish to stand firm.

[1] "*O ye people.*"—Eng. Ver.

But we must ascertain if all men have a right to glory on that ground, for wicked men also boast that *God is with them*, and in his name do not scruple to grow insolent and haughty; but their glorying is idle and unfounded. Now, the valour of the godly rests on the word of God, and proceeds from true faith; and if this dwells in our minds, we may triumph over all our enemies; as Paul also teaches, when he encourages the godly by this doctrine, *If God be for us, who shall be against us?* (Rom. viii. 31.) First, then, we ought to make sure that *God is with us*, which cannot be unless we embrace the promises by faith; and if we have faith, we do not glory in vain. As to his addressing a nation so distant, to whom that word could not reach, the reason is obvious, that the efficacy of the word might be made known to unbelievers, and that they might know that he would restrain the Assyrians with all their warlike accoutrements, though they were at a great distance; as if he had said, "You do indeed despise God, but it will be easy for him to keep you at a distance, and to repress all your rage."

Gird yourselves. This is not a superfluous repetition; for it is far more difficult to expect the assistance of God a second time, when we have once been delivered, than to embrace the promise of one single deliverance. Besides, although the first attacks of enemies do not so greatly alarm us, yet when we see them hardened in their malice, their obstinacy reduces us to weakness. We have experience of this every day; for if any danger threatens us, we may expect assistance from the Lord; but if we are again in danger, we give way; and so great is our ingratitude, that we scarcely think that God will help us a second time. In consequence of this, we faint if we are frequently brought into danger, and do not consider that God is never wearied by doing us good, and by continually assisting us.

Isaiah, therefore, intended to oppose this frailty of men, that when armed foes had once and again attacked us, we may stand firm. If, after being vanquished or weakened, they again muster their forces, and do not cease to annoy us, let us not be discouraged; for to-morrow, and the next day, and as often as they league together, God will be able

to frustrate and destroy them. Hence, also, we are reminded of our condition, that we may be always prepared for enduring additional conflicts, and may not think that we have done all that was required from us, when we have once resisted; for Satan is unwearied in his efforts, and continually labours to accomplish our destruction; he animates his soldiers, and inflames them with new eagerness. But although the contests must be often maintained, we are certain of victory, and therefore we ought to fight boldly, and to remain constantly on the field.

10. *Take counsel.* After having spoken of the forces of the enemies, he now comes to their *counsels;* as if he had said, "Although the enemies may abound not only in armour and in strength, but in *counsel* and wisdom, still they will accomplish nothing." And this warning was very necessary; for it often happens that we despise enemies, though powerful and well armed, because they want *counsel,* and are guided by blind violence rather than by reason. He therefore forewarns them that the craftiness of the enemies, and all the arts by which they endeavour to gain advantage over the people of God, will in the end be unsuccessful; and, therefore, that they will accomplish nothing, though they be in want of nothing, and though they may have a great abundance of everything, of forces, and *counsels,* and crafty designs. He adds—

Speak the word. To make the meaning more clear, I have rendered it *decree a decree.* This relates to their insolence, or it is the conclusion of the consultation; for after deliberation a *decree* usually follows. He declares that all these things will vanish into smoke. It is, therefore, sufficiently evident what the Prophet means, and to what purpose this passage ought to be applied; for it may be regarded as a shield by which we can drive away all the terrors of enemies, whether they excel, on the one hand, in forces, wealth, power, influence, and rank; or, on the other, in wisdom, counsel, craftiness, sagacity, and invention, or, in a word, in insolence. For we are well armed and very powerful, if *God is with us;* and, therefore, all the contrivances or decrees of adversaries will immediately vanish away.

For God is with us. כי עמנו אל, (*kī Immānū-ēl;*) literally, *for Immanuel.* We have already explained the force of this argument.[1] For my own part, I have no doubt that he alludes to the name which he formerly gave to Christ; for although he means that God assists his people, yet as the majesty of God is not of itself sufficient to support us, he contemplates God himself in the person of the Mediator, in whom alone he has promised to assist us.

11. *For thus Jehovah spake to me.* Here the Prophet contends against another kind of temptations, that is, against the unbelief of the people; and in order to make that more manifest, it ought to be observed that there were two remarkable temptations, the one external, and the other internal. The external temptation came from professed enemies, such as from the Assyrian; and when the people saw his plundering and cruelty, they thought that all was over with them, because he had brought them almost to utter ruin. The other temptation was internal; for that sacred people, which boasted of having been chosen by God, relied on the assistance of man rather than of God. Now, this was a most dangerous temptation; for it appeared as if that nation, by its unbelief, refused admission to the promises of God, which were daily offered, and which were continually sounded in their ears. And what could the Prophet think, amidst so great perplexity, but that the destruction of this wicked people, which did not cease wickedly to reject the grace of God, was close at hand? The Lord, therefore, determined that both the Prophet and his disciples should be armed against a temptation of this kind.

As if by taking hold of my hand.[2] This is a beautiful metaphor, which the commentators, I think, have not understood. He alludes to fathers or teachers, who, when their words have not sufficient effect, seize the hand of their children or scholars, and hold them so as to compel them to obey. Thus the servants of the Lord are sometimes disposed to throw everything away, because they think that they

[1] See page 271.

[2] *With a strong hand.*—Eng. Ver. The marginal reading is, "Heb. *in strength of hand.*"—*Ed.*

are labouring to no purpose; but the Lord *lays*, as it were, *his hand* on them, and holds them fast, that they may go forward in the discharge of their duty. This is well understood to be very necessary, and is actually experienced by all who faithfully serve the Lord; for no temptation is more severe than when they in whom faith ought to dwell revolt; and, in a word, when faith appears to be banished from the world.

This *taking hold of the hand* is, therefore, highly necessary, because not only are we fickle and liable to unsteadiness, but we are also by nature too much inclined to what is evil, though no one entice us. But if the force of custom be added, we are scarcely master of ourselves. Undoubtedly, we would every moment be driven up and down, were it not that we are held by the powerful government of God, and fix the anchor of constancy in firm ground. Every one of us ought to meditate earnestly on this thought; for though we may be convinced, yet when it comes to the trial we fail, and look at men rather than God. We should, therefore, attend more carefully to this doctrine, and pray to God to hold us, not only by his word but by *laying his hand* on us.

Besides, it ought to be observed that we are exceedingly disposed to wicked imitation. When we see bad examples, we are drawn to them with great force, and take the example for a law; for when others go before us, we think that we have a right to act in the same manner, and especially when it is not only one or a few persons who have led the way, but the custom has become universal. What is in itself manifestly wrong is concealed by the plausible cloak of public opinion; and not only so, but all are carried, as it were, by the violence of a whirlwind, to adopt an established custom, as if the will of the people had the force of a law to authorize their corruptions. This has not been the fault of a single age, but at the present day it abounds as much or even more than before; for it is an evil deeply seated in all by the corruption of nature, to reckon a prevailing error as a law. Hence arise the superstitions of all ages, and those which at the present day exist in Popery, the origin of which, if it be investigated, will be found to be nothing else than

that some persons have drawn others into the same error; and thus almost all have been foolishly caught by the snares of Satan, and the general agreement of men is still the chief foundation of those superstitions. All defend themselves by this weapon. "We are not alone," say they; "we follow an immense multitude."

12. *Say not, a conspiracy.* First, we must consider what was the condition of that people, for they saw that they were not provided with numerous forces, and were not able to contend in battle against such powerful enemies. They longed for outward assistance, and eagerly desired to obtain it, for they thought that they were utterly ruined if they did not obtain the assistance of others. In this sense I understand the word *conspiracy,* that they thought it necessary to have the assistance of allies. The word *conspiracy* being employed by the Hebrews in different acceptations, and sometimes denoting a *bond,* I take it in a good sense. But some take it in a bad sense: "Behold thy enemies, the king of Israel and the king of Syria, have *conspired* together." But I rather agree with those who apply it to the league and friendship which many unbelievers were desirous to contract with the Assyrian. The Lord therefore admonishes Isaiah not to regard the counsels of wicked men, though the whole of the people should vie with each other in attending to them.

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. There may also be a twofold meaning; for some read it separately, as if in this second clause the Prophet condemned in general terms the wicked customs of the people. But these two clauses ought rather to be joined together. "Let it not distress you, if your countrymen in the present day plot about unlawful confederacies, and do not consent to them." Now, though the Prophet belonged to the number of those who needed to be admonished not foolishly to dissuade others from following by faith, yet the plural number, *say ye not,* shows that all the godly were taught in his person.

Their fear. Hence we perceive what is the source of those wavering *counsels* by which men are agitated; it is, because their minds are overwhelmed by *terror,* so that they are

violently hurried along without any moderation. He describes the cause of all this, why the Jews so eagerly desired to have the Assyrians for allies. It was because they were terrified beyond measure, and did not expect to be preserved in any other way, and because their blind *fear* did not permit them to look to the assistance of the Lord. This was the reason why they so eagerly desired a league. The same cause of fear was alleged both against the godly and against the ungodly; but all did not fear in the same manner, for the godly composed their minds, because they knew that God took care of their preservation, and, armed by the promise of God, cheered their hearts whenever they mentioned the name of *Immanuel*. But the ungodly, overcome by terror, thought of nothing but the assistance of the Assyrians, did not consider that there is help in God, and did not betake themselves to him. The Lord certainly does not forbid the godly to *fear*, for they cannot avoid that; but he bids them overcome that excessive terror by which the ungodly are swallowed up. Let us not, therefore, by their example, gaze around in every direction, and rush headlong to seek unlawful aid; and especially we must beware lest *fear* take away our judgment. There is but one remedy for this evil, to restrain ourselves by the word of God, from which proceeds real tranquillity of mind. Comparing the condition of that people with our own, let us learn to betake ourselves to *the name of God*, which will be to us an impregnable fortress. (Prov. xviii. 10.)

That the Lord did not speak to the Prophet alone, is also evident from the words being in the plural number, לֹא תִירָאוּ, (*lō thīrĕū,*) *fear ye not.* Peter also has drawn from it a general doctrine, (1 Pet. iii. 14,) warning us not to *fear* with the *fear* of the ungodly, but to place all our confidence in God, and to keep our eyes continually fixed on him, that we may remain steadfast, though heaven and earth should be mingled. If that warning of Peter was ever necessary, it is especially so in the present day, for we see all things tossed up and down and mingled in frightful confusion. That we may not be disturbed, the Lord withdraws us from beholding men, that we may, by attending to his word, keep our

position firmly. Peter, indeed, understands this *fear* passively, while Isaiah understands it actively; for Peter exhorts believers to perseverance, so as not to waver on account of the threats and terrors of the ungodly; but Isaiah condemns the *trembling*, which induced the Jews to seek heathen alliances. But as it was not the intention of Peter to explain this passage, or even to quote the exact words, and as he meant only to allude to that statement, we need not wonder at this diversity.

13. *Sanctify Jehovah of hosts himself.* We have said that the reason why dangers lead to immoderate alarm is, that wretched men do not raise their eyes and minds to heaven. The Prophet now, therefore, proposes a suitable remedy for allaying terrors, that they who dread the evils which threaten them may learn to give to God the honour due to him. To *sanctify the God of armies* means to exalt his power highly; so as to remember that he holds the government of the world, and that the beginning and the end of good and evil actions are at his disposal. Hence it follows that, in some respects, God is robbed of his holiness, when we do not immediately betake ourselves to him in cases of perplexity. This mode of expression, therefore, is highly emphatic; for it shows us that no higher affront can be offered to God than to give way to *fear*, as if he were not exalted above all creatures, so as to control all events. On the other hand, when we rely on his aid, and, through victorious steadfastness of faith, despise dangers, then do we actually ascribe to him lawful government; for if we are not convinced that innumerable methods, though unknown to us, are in his power for our deliverance, we conceive of him as a dead idol.

And let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. He properly adds, that *God himself* should be the *fear* and the *dread* of the people, in order to inform them that there awaits them a just and lawful reward of their crimes and of their contempt of God, when they thus in wretchedness and alarm tremble at dangers. Though he speaks not only of *fear* but of *dread*, yet he does not mean that the Jews should be filled with horror at the name of God, so as to desire to flee from him, but merely demands from them reverence for

God, and uses both words in order to express continuance. He therefore means that they will be free and exempted from solicitude of mind, if a sincere fear of God be deeply engraven on their hearts, and never pass away from them; and indeed every person who freely devotes himself to God, and undertakes to fear him alone, so as to lay this restraint on himself, will find that no haven is more safe than his protection. But as the ungodly do not cease to provoke his anger by shameless transgression, he harasses their minds by continual uneasiness, and thus inflicts the most appropriate revenge for their careless indifference.

14. *And he shall be for a sanctuary.* He promises that the true worshippers of God will enjoy tranquillity of mind, because the Lord, covering them, as it were, under his wings, will quickly dispel all their fears. There is an allusion to the word *sanctify* which he had lately used; for the word מקדש, (*mikdash,*) which means sometimes *a sanctuary,* and sometimes *a place of refuge,* is derived from the same root.[1] The meaning therefore is, that God demands nothing for which he does not offer mutual recompense, because every one that *sanctifies* him will undoubtedly find him to be *a place of refuge.* Now, although in this sanctification there is a mutual relation between us and God, yet there is a difference, for we *sanctify* him by ascribing all praise and glory to him, and by relying entirely upon him; but he *sanctifies* us, by guarding and preserving us from all evils. As there were few who believed and relied on his promises, the Prophet wished that the godly should be fortified against this kind of temptation; for there was a danger lest they should be carried away by such bad examples as by a kind of tempest.

The Prophet therefore meant, "The Lord will be your best and most faithful guardian. Though others stumble against him, yet be not you terrified; remain steadfastly in your calling." And here a contrast is implied, though not expressed; for a *sanctuary* may be said to be a citadel situated in a lofty position, and a bulwark for defending and

[1] It may aid the English reader, in understanding this observation, to be reminded that the two words *sanctify* and *sanctuary,* come from the same root, *sanct,* or *saint,* that is, *holy.*—*Ed.*

guarding the godly, but for destroying and overwhelming the ungodly, because they rashly stumble against it. We shall afterwards see more clearly how this was fulfilled, partly during the reign of Hezekiah, and partly at the time of the captivity into Babylon; and yet at the same time Christ was prefigured, who was to be not a place of refuge, but rather *a stone of stumbling* to the Israelites. Isaiah forewarns them of this *stumbling*, that the godly may be aware of it.

To the two houses of Israel. The Jews ignorantly and improperly tear asunder this verse, instead of dividing it. "God will be," say they, "partly a *sanctuary* and partly a *stone of stumbling*;" as if by the two families he distinguished between the godly and the unbelievers. On the contrary, he enjoins believers, though nearly the whole multitude of both kingdoms should dissuade them from obedience to God, not to be discouraged, but to disregard everything else, and break through all opposition. The Prophet might have simply said, *he will be for an offence to Israel;* but he intended to express more, for he includes the whole nation, and declares that God will be their destruction. The nation was divided into two kingdoms, Ephraim and Judah; and, therefore, he mentioned both. There were, indeed, some exceptions, but he speaks here of the whole body.

This is a remarkable passage and cannot be sufficiently called to remembrance, especially at the present time, when we see the state of religion throughout the whole Christian world brought nearly to ruin. Many boast that they are Christians who are strongly alienated from God, and to whom Christ is a *stone of stumbling*. The papists insolently and proudly boast of his name, though they profane the whole of his worship by superstitions, and bring upon it dishonour and reproach. Among those to whom a purer worship of God has been restored, there are very few who embrace the Gospel of God with sincere regard. Wherever we turn our eyes, very sore temptations meet us in every direction; and, therefore, we ought to remember this highly useful instruction, that it is no new thing, if a great multitude of persons, and almost all who boast that they belong to the Church, *stumble against*

God. Yet let us constantly adhere to him, however small may be our numbers.

For a snare to the inhabitant of Jerusalem. This is the second circumstance introduced for heightening the picture; for, after having mentioned the two kingdoms, he names the metropolis itself. Although the whole country was crippled, yet it seemed that the Lord kept his abode there. He therefore means that God became *a snare*, not only to the common people who were scattered throughout the fields and villages, but to the nobles themselves, and to the priests who dwelt in *Jerusalem*, who dwelt in that holy habitation in which God intended that the remembrance of his name should be chiefly preserved. That was testified also by David, that *those builders* whom the Lord appointed *rejected the chief corner-stone.* (Ps. cxviii. 22.) Christ quotes this passage against the Jews, and shows that it applies to himself. (Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10.) This happened, indeed, in the time of Isaiah, but still more in the time of Christ; for ungodliness and rebellion gradually increased till they came to a height. Accordingly, both the highest and the lowest, who always had obstinately disobeyed God, at that time broke out against him still more with unrestrained indulgence, and therefore their destruction also reached its height; for they were altogether rejected by God, whose Son they had refused. Hence also we infer the eternal divinity of Christ, for Paul shows that it is God of whom the Prophet here speaks. (Rom. ix. 33.) Now, he speaks not of a pretended God, but of that God by whom heaven and earth were created, and who revealed himself to Moses. (Exod. iii. 6.) It is, therefore, the same God by whom the Church has been always governed.

15. *And many among them shall stumble.* He goes on to threaten the ungodly, as he had formerly begun, and declares that those who refuse to trust in God will not escape without being punished. The threatening runs thus: "when they have *stumbled*, they will then *fall*, and afterwards they will *be bruised.*" This agrees with the former metaphor, in which he compared God to a stone. Christ has alluded to that metaphor, including both clauses. *He who shall fall*

on this stone will be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will bruise him. (Matt. xxi. 44.)

And shall be snared and taken. This agrees with the latter metaphor, in which he compared God to a *snare* and *gin.* Let not the ungodly, therefore, imagine that they are stronger or wiser than God; for they will find that he excels them in strength and wisdom, and that to their destruction. They must, therefore, unavoidably be ruined; for either they will be utterly *bruised,* or they will be *snared* in such a manner, that they can never extricate themselves.

This threatening also regards the godly, that they may not hesitate to withdraw from holding fellowship with the multitude, and that they may not resolutely disregard the sinfulness of revolt. Now, this does not strictly belong to God, but is rather, as we would say, accidental; for it belongs to God to receive men into his favour, and to give them a firm security for their salvation. That was more clearly manifested in Christ, and is still manifested; and, therefore, Peter reminds us that, though many unbelievers *stumble,* this is no reason why their *stumbling* should obstruct the progress of our faith; for Christ is notwithstanding *a chosen and precious stone.* (1 Pet. ii. 4.)

16. *Bind up the testimony.* The Lord now turns his discourse to the Prophet, and encourages him, while he must contend against apostates and rebels, to discharge his office with boldness and perseverance. This was highly necessary, for Isaiah had met with great obstinacy in the people; so that if he had only looked at their present condition, that is, at the unbelief of the people, and his fruitless and unsuccessful exertions, he must have altogether given way. On this account the Lord determined to confirm and *seal* his calling, not only on his account, but for the sake of all who should obey his doctrine; and if very few persons believed the words of the Prophet, still the Lord testifies that his doctrine has been sealed to them, and that, therefore, neither must he desist from his office of teaching, nor must they cease to yield the obedience of faith.

Seal the law. He compares the doctrine of the word to a *sealed* letter, which may indeed be felt and handled by

many persons, but yet is read and understood by few, that is, by those to whom it is sent and addressed. Thus the word of God is received by few, that is, by the elect, though it is held out indiscriminately to all. The word is therefore *sealed* to those who derive no advantage from it, and is *sealed* in such a manner that the Lord unseals and opens it to his own people by the Spirit. Some derive the verb צור (*tzōr*) from נצר, (*nātzăr*,) and translate it *keep*. But though this does not greatly affect the general meaning, still the superiority of the rendering which I have followed[1] may be proved from the other verb *seal;* for the custom in ancient times was, first, to tie a thread around a letter, and then to *seal* it.

We draw from it this highly useful doctrine, namely, that teachers and ministers of the word ought constantly to persevere in discharging their office, though it may seem that all men revolt, and give no evidence of anything but obstinacy and rebellion; for the Lord will reserve for himself some disciples, by whom his letter will be read with advantage, though it be closed to others. The Prophet afterwards employs the same metaphor, when he says, that *the word is like a closed book*, (Is. xxix. 11;) but there he only mentions wicked men, and here he mentions disciples, to whom the doctrine of the word is not without advantage.

It may be objected, Was it then the duty of the Prophet to disregard the people, and to withdraw and shut himself up with the disciples, among whom some good effect was produced? I reply, this was not the Prophet's meaning; for it was the will of the Lord that Isaiah should appear in public, and cry aloud, and reveal his will to all. But as he spoke to the deaf, and might be discouraged by seeing no evidence of the fruit of his labours, the Lord determined to excite and encourage him to go forward, even when matters were in a desperate condition, and, satisfied with his disciples, though their number was small, to become every day more and more courageous.

17. *Therefore I will wait for the* LORD.[2] I have chosen to

[1] Which is also followed in the English Bible, namely, *Bind.—Ed.*

[2] AND *I will wait for the* LORD.—Eng. Ver.

render the particle ו (*vau*) by *therefore;* for the Prophet recovers himself, after having received from the Lord the consolation which we have just now seen. "Seeing that the Lord is pleased to have disciples to whom his doctrine is sealed, *I will wait for him,* though *he hath hid his face from Jacob,* that is, hath rejected and cast off his people." This is a remarkable passage, and, by meditating continually on it, we must be greatly encouraged; for though it may seem as if the whole world had revolted, still we ought boldly to persevere; and even though God *hath hid his face* from his people, and they who professed his name have been cast off, still we ought to *wait for him* with unshaken hope. This is the only remedy that is left to us.

The word *wait* is exceedingly emphatic; as if he had said, "Still I will not turn aside from God, I will persevere in faith." He increases the force of it by adding, *I will look for him;* for the occurrence of any offence is wont to make our faith waver and faint, and it is most grievously shaken when we see that we are deprived of allies, and that there are open enemies who boldly take to themselves the name of the Church. Offences commonly turn us aside from God, and perplex us in such a manner that we call in question the truth of the word. This consolation is therefore highly necessary, whether the Church is oppressed by outward calamities, or thrown into confusion by the treachery of the multitude.

18. *Behold, I.* Here the Prophet not only testifies that he will wait patiently, but also gives an evidence of courage, by appearing in public along with the disciples whom he had gained to God, and who still remained. As if he had said, "Though others may withdraw, yet I am ready to obey thee, and I bring along with me those whom thou hast been pleased to preserve in a wonderful manner through my agency." He therefore declares by these words his unshaken courage, and promises that he will persevere in faith and obedience to the Lord, though all should revolt.

And the children. By *children* are meant the various classes of servants, agreeably to the ordinary custom of the Hebrew, and also of the Latin language.[1] He speaks of the

[1] The allusion is to the Latin noun *Puer,* to which might have been

disciples whom he had formerly mentioned. Hence we see what is demanded from those who wish to be reckoned among the true disciples of the Lord. It is, to declare with Isaiah that they are submissive and ready to hear, and that, as soon as the Lord has spoken, they will yield immediate obedience. Now, teachers ought to bring disciples with them, and not merely to send them before; they ought, I say, to go before them, and by their example to point out the way, as was formerly explained,[1] (Is. ii. 3;) otherwise they will have no authority in teaching. The apostle to the Hebrews applies this passage to Christ, (Heb. ii. 13,) and draws from it an instruction which ought to be a very powerful excitement to us, that considering ourselves to be followers not only of Isaiah, but of Christ himself, as our leader and instructor, we may press forward with greater alacrity.

Whom the LORD *hath given me.* By this the Prophet shows to whom our faith ought to be ascribed. It is to God, and to his undeserved election; for Isaiah taught publicly, admonished every person, and invited all without exception to come to God; but his doctrine is of advantage to those only who have been given to him by God. By *given* he means those whom God drew by an inward and secret operation of his Spirit, when the sound of the external voice fell on the ears of the multitude without producing any good effect. In like manner Christ declares that the elect were *given to him by the Father.* (John xvii. 6.) Thus we see that readiness to believe does not depend on the will of men; but that some of the multitude believe, because, as Luke tells us, *they had been foreordained.* (Acts xiii. 48.) Now, *whom he foreordained he likewise calls,* (Rom. viii. 30,) and efficaciously seals in them the proof of their adoption, that they may become obedient and submissive. Such, therefore, is the *giving* of which Isaiah now speaks. This applies strictly to Christ, to whom the Father presents and gives disciples, as it is said in the Gospel by John, *No man cometh to me,*

added the Greek noun παῖς, and similar uses of the word denoting *Child* are found in modern languages.—*Ed.*

[1] See page 94, where the difference between *Come* and *Go up* is explained.—*Ed.*

unless the Father hath drawn him. (John vi. 44.) Hence it follows, that he is also appointed to be our guardian, to preserve us under his protection to the end. (John x. 28.) Wherefore he saith, *not one of those whom the Father hath given to me shall perish.* (John xvii. 12.)

For signs and wonders. Some consider this passage to refer to miracles, but that is inapplicable, for the meaning is totally different, namely, that all the godly will be regarded not only with hatred, but even with abhorrence, as if they had been monsters; and that not only by strangers or by professed enemies, but even by *Israel.* We have experience of this at the present day; for papists look upon us with greater abhorrence than they look upon Mahometans or Jews, or even dogs or monsters. Though this is exceedingly base, we need not greatly wonder at it; for it was necessary that this prophecy should even now be fulfilled. It was experienced by Isaiah from his countrymen, and has been experienced by all others who have followed his doctrine.

Nor is it only in papists that we discover it, but in those who wish to be regarded as very closely connected with the Church, the greater part of whom either view us with strong dislike, or ridicule us, or, in a word, hold us to be monsters, because we are so anxious, and give ourselves so much uneasiness, about the salvation of the Church, the honour of God, and eternal life; and because we do not scruple to undergo so many dangers, such hatred, censure, reproach, banishment, poverty, hunger, nakedness, and, in a word, death itself. These things appear monstrous to them; for when they are so careful to protect their skin, how could they have a relish for the highest blessings? But that we may not be disturbed by their reproaches, we must arm ourselves with this exhortation of the Prophet.

From the LORD *of hosts.* To show how trifling and worthless is the conspiracy of the wicked multitude, he contrasts the *God of armies* with the pride of the whole world, and raises a lofty defiance; as if he had said, that he cared not though he were universally abhorred by men, because he knew that God was on his side.

Who dwelleth in Mount Zion. The addition of these words

carries great weight; for although the people abounded in every kind of crimes and enormities, still they boasted that they were devoted to God, and, abusing his promises, condemned the true servants of God who reproved them. On the other hand, the Prophets, in order to shake off their false confidence and pride, declared that they were the servants of the only and true God, whom the people falsely boasted of worshipping *in Mount Zion.* God had not chosen it for his habitation as if, because he was bound to the spot, he would accept of false and spurious worship, but he wished to be sought and worshipped according to the rule of his word.

Accordingly, when Isaiah claims for himself God *who dwelleth in Mount Zion,* he sharply reproves hypocrites, because through false boasting they indulge in foolish pride whenever they say, *The temple of the Lord,* (Jer. vii. 4,) for it was rather an idol in which they boasted contrary to the word. Though they snatched at the promises, yet they falsely tortured them against the true servants of God, as the papists at the present day are wont to torture them against us. The Prophets, therefore, distinguish God by this title, in order to tear the mask from hypocrites, who were accustomed to quote the mere name of *the temple* in opposition to the plain word of God. For this reason Isaiah now says, "Take us, if you choose, for monsters, yet God acknowledges us to be his own; and you cannot detest us without at the same time abhorring the God of Abraham and David, whose servants we are."

19. *And when they shall say to you.* Isaiah continues the former subject, which is, that all the godly should not only use the authority of God as a shield, but should fortify themselves with it as a brazen wall, to contend against all ungodliness. He therefore entreats them to resist courageously if any one shall tempt them to superstition and unlawful modes of worship. The plural number is employed by him in order to signify that it was a vice which pervaded all ranks, and which abounded everywhere; as if he had said, "I see what will happen; you will be placed in great danger; for your countrymen will endeavour to draw you away from the true God; for, being themselves ungodly, they will wish you to

resemble them." At the same time he shows how wickedly they had departed from God's law and covenant, by shamelessly pushing forward diviners and soothsayers whose name ought to have been held by them in abhorrence.

Should not a people ask counsel of their God? Some read these words in connection with what goes before, applying them to the ungodly, as if this were a pretence which they abused in order to deceive the simple; because there is no nation that has not oracles and revelations, but every nation *consults its gods*, or, in place of them, magicians and soothsayers. But what I reckon to be the more correct view is, that Isaiah advises his disciples to give this answer if they shall happen to be tempted to wicked modes of worship. Still the meaning is not fully cleared up; for this passage is commonly expounded as if it were a comparison drawn from the less to the greater. "What! seeing that the Gentiles consult their gods, and yet these gods are false, shall we not more highly esteem him whom we know to be the true God, and who hath revealed himself to us by so many proofs? What a shame will it be if their idols are more highly valued by the Gentiles than God is by us!"

But I interpret this as referring to the Jews themselves, who were called by way of eminence (κατ' ἐξοχὴν) *the people*, because God had adopted them. Nor is it of any importance that the Prophet employs the plural form אלהיו,[1] (*ĕlōhaiv*;) for אלהים (*ĕlōhīm*) is used as in the singular number. This is a shield by which all the superstitions which come imperceptibly upon us ought to be repelled. While some ponder and hesitate whether or not it be proper to consult diviners, let us have this answer in readiness, that God alone ought to be consulted. The Prophet alludes to that passage in Deuteronomy in which the Lord forbade them to go to magicians and soothsayers; and lest they should excuse themselves on the pretence that every nation had its inter-

[1] If אלהים (*ĕlōhīm*) were not only a plural form, as it actually is, but used in a plural signification, it would mean *gods*, and אלהיו (*ĕlōhaiv*) would mean *his gods*; but since אלהים (*ĕlōhīm*) means *God*, אלהיו (*ĕlōhaiv*) means *his God*. It may be proper to add that the pronominal affix *his* agrees with עם, (*gnam*,) *people*, which is masculine.—*Ed.*

preters or fortune-tellers, added, that they would not cease to have a *Prophet,* or be deprived of necessary instruction. (Deut. xviii. 10-15.) It was therefore the will of the Lord that they should depend entirely on his word, and should learn from it alone whatever was useful for them to know, and should render obedience to him.

From the living to the dead. The preposition בעד (*bĕgnad*) is variously rendered: frequently it is translated *for;* and in that case the meaning will be, "Shall *the dead* be consulted *for* the business of *the living?*" But as that meaning is forced, it would perhaps be better to explain it thus: "The Lord desires to be our teacher, and for that purpose hath appointed prophets, that we may learn from them his will, for a prophet is the mouth of the Lord. It is therefore unlawful to go *to the dead,* who have not been appointed for that end; for God did not intend to make use of *the dead* for instructing us."

But when I examine the whole matter more closely, I choose rather to consider בעד (*bĕgnad*) to mean *from,* that is, *from the living to the dead;* as if he had said, "One God is sufficient for us for *the living and the dead.* If you search through heaven, earth, and hell, you will find that one God is sufficient for us." This is, I think, the best sense, and flows naturally. Accordingly, the Prophet arms the godly against the schemes and contrivances of wicked men by whom they might otherwise have been tempted to revolt, with the exhortation to be satisfied with God alone as their teacher, and not to offer him such an insult as to disregard his instruction and seek other teachers, but to cast away everything else, and depend on his truth alone, which immediately afterwards he again repeats and confirms.

20. *To the law and testimony.* There are indeed various ways of explaining this passage. Some think that it is the form of an oath, as if the Prophet were swearing *by the law* that they were apostates, and would entice others to a similar apostacy. But I take a different view of it, which is, that he directs our attention *to the law and the testimony;* for the preposition ל, (*lamed,*) *to,* plainly shows that this is the meaning. Now, *the testimony* is joined with the *law,* not as

if it were different, but for the sake of explanation, "*to the law,*" which contains *the testimony* or *declaration* of the will of God toward us. In short, we ought to take the word *testimony* as describing a quality, in order to inform us what advantage we derive from *the law;* namely, that God reveals himself to us in *the law,* and declares what is that relation to us which he chooses to hold, and lays down what he demands from us, and in short everything necessary to be known.

It is therefore a very high commendation of *the law* that it contains the doctrine of salvation, and the rule of a good and happy life. For this reason also he justly forbids us to turn aside from it in the smallest degree; as if he should say, "Forsake all the superstitions on which they are so madly bent; for they are not satisfied with having God alone, and call to their aid innumerable inventions." In this manner also Christ speaks, *They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,* (Luke xvi. 29;) for though Abraham is there brought forward as the speaker, still it is a permanent oracle which is uttered by the mouth of God. We are therefore enjoined to *hear the law and the prophets,* that we may not be under the influence of eager curiosity, or seek to learn anything from *the dead.* If *the law and the prophets* had not been sufficient, the Lord would not have refused to allow us other assistance.

Hence we learn that everything which is added to the word must be condemned and rejected. It is the will of the Lord that we shall depend wholly on his word, and that our knowledge shall be confined within its limits; and therefore, if we lend our ears to others, we take a liberty which he has forbidden, and offer to him a gross insult. Everything that is introduced by men on their own authority will be nothing else than a corruption of the word; and consequently, if we wish to obey God, we must reject all other instructors. He likewise warns us that, if we abide by *the law* of the Lord, we shall be protected against superstitions and wicked modes of worship; for, as Paul calls *the word of God the sword of the Spirit,* (Eph. vi. 17,) so by the word, Satan and all his contrivances are put to flight. We ought therefore to flee to him whenever we shall be attacked by enemies, that, being

armed with it, we may contend valiantly, and at length put them to flight.

If they shall not speak. I do not relate all the expositions of this passage, for that would be too tedious; and I consider the true exposition to be so well supported that it will easily refute all others. It is usually explained to mean that wicked men trifle with their inventions, and expose their impostures to sale, *because there is no light in them;* that is, because they have not ordinary understanding. For my own part, I consider this to be a reason for encouraging believers to perseverance; that if wicked men depart from the true doctrine, they will evince nothing else than their own blindness and darkness. We ought to despise their folly, that it may not be an obstruction to us; as Christ also teaches us that we should boldly set aside such persons, so as not to be in any degree affected by their blindness or obstinacy. "*They are blind,*" says he, "*and leaders of the blind.* Do you wish of your own accord to perish with them?" (Matt. xv. 14.)

The Prophet therefore enjoins us to ascribe to the word such high authority, that we shall venture boldly to despise the whole world, if the word be opposed by them; for if even angels should do this, we might condemn them also by the authority of the word. *If an angel from heaven,* says Paul, *preach anything else, let him be accursed.* (Gal. i. 8, 9.) How much more boldly, therefore, shall we condemn men who set themselves in opposition to God? The mode of expression is emphatic, *If they shall not speak according to this word.* He brings an accusation of blindness against every man who does not instantly and without dispute adopt this sentiment, that we ought not to be wise beyond *the law* of God.

21. *Then they shall pass through that land.* Not to permit believers to be ensnared by the common errors, he adds how dreadful is the punishment which awaits the ungodly when they have revolted from God, and have laboured to induce others to join in the same revolt. The passage is somewhat obscure; but the obscurity arises from the want of proper attention in examining the words. The verb עבר (*gnābăr*) is emphatic; for by *passing through* he means that

uncertainty in which men wander up and down, and are not able to find a resting-place, or any permanent abode. To the indefinite verb we must supply a noun, *The Jews shall pass.* By the pronoun בה, (*bāhh,*) *in it,*[1] he means Judea, which the Lord had preferred to all other countries; and therefore it is easily understood, though the Prophet does not express it. As if he had said, "I promised indeed that that country would be the perpetual inheritance of my people, (Gen. xiii. 15; xvii. 8;) but they shall lead a wandering and restless life, as is the case with those who, driven from their habitations, and afflicted with hunger and pestilence and every kind of calamities, seek, but nowhere find, a better condition and abode." These words are therefore contrasted with the extraordinary kindness of God, which is so frequently mentioned by Moses, namely, that they will have a fixed residence in Judea; for here he threatens that they will be stragglers and wanderers, not in their own, but in a foreign country; so that, wherever they come, they will be attacked and hunted down by innumerable vexations.

When they shall be hungry. The Prophet appears to point out the conversion of the Jews, as if he had said, "When they have been weighed down by afflictions they will at length repent;" and undoubtedly this is the remedy by which the Lord generally cures the disease of obstinacy. Yet if any one suppose that the word *hunger* describes the indignation and roaring of the wicked without repentance, it may be stated that it includes not only hunger and thirst, but, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) every other kind of calamity.

They shall fret themselves.[2] They will begin to be displeased with themselves, and to loathe all the supports on which they had formerly relied; and this is the beginning of repentance; for in prosperity we flatter ourselves, but in sore adversity we loathe everything that is around us. But if it be thought preferable to refer it to the reprobate, this word denotes the

[1] *Through it.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] Not satisfied with the Latin word *irritentur* for conveying the import of the Hebrew התקצף, (*hithkatzēph,*) CALVIN illustrates it by a phrase taken from his own vernacular, *Ils se despiteront,* which means, *they will fume,* or *chafe,* or *burst into furious passion.*—*Ed.*

bitterness, which is so far from leading them to humility that it rather aggravates their rage.

And curse their king and their God. By *King* some suppose that he means *God.* In this sense Zephaniah used the word מלכם (*malchām*), that is, *their King.* (Zeph. i. 5.) But here I draw a distinction between *King* and *God;* for wicked men are first blinded by a false confidence in idols, and afterwards they place their defence in earthly things. When the Jews had a *king,* they were proud of his glory and power; and when Isaiah preached, wicked men enraged *the king* against him, and even aroused the whole of the nation to follow *the king* as their standard-bearer. Since, therefore, their false boasting had been partly in the idols and partly in *the king,* he threatens that they will be afflicted with so many calamities, that they will be constrained to abhor both *their gods* and *the king.* And this is the beginning of repentance, to loathe and drive far from us everything that kept us back or led us away from God.

And look upward. He describes the trembling and agitation of mind by which wretched men are tormented until they have learned steadfastly to look up. There is, indeed, some proficiency, as I lately hinted, when, in consequence of having been taught by afflictions and chastisements, we throw away our indifference and endeavour to find out remedies. But we must advance farther. Fixing our eye on God alone we must not gaze on all sides, or through fickleness be *tossed to and fro.* (Eph. iv. 14.) However that may be, Isaiah threatens the utter destruction of the Jews; for so thoroughly were they hardened, that their rebellion could not be subdued by a light and moderate chastisement from the hand of God. Yet it might be taken in a good sense, that the Jews will at length raise their eyes to heaven; but in that case we must read separately what follows:—

22. *And when they shall look to the earth.* The meaning will then be, that the Jews will be converted to God, because they will be deprived of every assistance on *the earth,* and will see nothing but frightful calamities, to whatever side they turn their eyes.

Behold, trouble and darkness. These words are partly

figurative and partly literal; for by *dimness* and *darkness* he means nothing else than adversity, according to the custom of Scripture. But he adds, *driven to darkness.* This aggravates the calamity to an amazing degree; for if one who is in *darkness* be *driven* or *pushed forward,* he is far more in danger of stumbling than before. Thus he intimates, that to a heavy calamity another still heavier will be added, that they may be more completely ruined; for he means nothing else than that the judgments of God will be so dreadful, and the punishments so severe, that, whether they will or not, they shall be constrained to look up to heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

1. Nevertheless, the dimness *shall* not *be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

3. Thou hast multiplied the nation, *and* not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, *and* as *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

5. For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire.

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

1. Non tamen obscuratio juxta angustiam quæ ei accidit tempore quò primùm leviter attigerunt terram Zabulon et terram Nephtali: nec posterius, cùm aggravarunt per viam maris ultra Iordanem, in Galilæa Gentium.

2. Populus ambulans in tenebris vidit lucem magnam. Qui habitabant in terra umbræ mortis, lux affulsit super eos.

3. Multiplicando gentem non auxisti lætitiam, lætati sunt coram te secundum lætitiam in messe, quemadmodum exultant dividendo spolia.

4. Quoniam jugum ejus onerosum, et virgam humeri ejus, sceptrum exactoris ejus confregisti, sicut in die Madian.

5. Quanquam omne prœlium bellantis fit cum strepitu et volutatione vestis in sanguine; erit hoc in combustionem, cibum ignis.

6. Quia puer natus est nobis; et constitutus est principatus super humerum ejus; et vocabitur nomen ejus, Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus fortis, Pater seculi, princeps pacis.

7. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

8. The LORD sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

9. And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

10. The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change *them into* cedars.

11. Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;

12. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

13. For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts:

14. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

15. The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail.

16. For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err; and *they that are* led of them *are* destroyed.

17. Therefore the LORD shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one *is* an hypocrite and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

18. For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest; and they shall mount up *like* the lifting up of smoke.

19. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened,

7. Multiplicationi principatus et paci non erit finis; super solium David, et super regnum ejus, ut disponat et stabiliat ipsum in judicio et justitia, ab hoc tempore usque in perpetuum. Zelus Iehovæ exercituum hanc rem faciet.

8. Verbum misit Dominus in Iacob, et cecidit in Israel.

9. Et sciet populus, omnes Ephraim, et incolæ Samariæ, qui dicunt in superbia et altitudine cordis,

10. Lateres ceciderunt, et politis ædificabimus; sycomori succisæ sunt, et cedros sufficiemus.

11. Atqui roborabit Iehova hostes Rezin contra ipsum; et inimicos ejus coadjuvabit.

12. Syria a fronte, et Philistæi a tergo; devorabuntque Israel toto ore. Nec in hoc toto aversus erit furor ejus, sed manus ejus adhuc extenta.

13. Atqui populus non est reversus ad percussorem suum; nec Iehovam exercituum quæsierunt.

14. Abscindet ergo Iehova ab Israele caput et caudam, ramum et arundinem die uno.

15. Senex et vultu suspiciendus, hic est caput: Propheta autem qui docet mendacium, hic est cauda.

16. Nam gubernatores populi hujus, sunt seductores; et qui reguntur in eo, perditi.

17. Propterea super adolescentibus ejus non gaudebit Dominus; et pupillorum ejus et viduarum non miserebitur. Quoniam omnes sunt hypocritæ et scelerati, et omne os loquitur nequitiam. In hoc toto non erit aversus furor ejus, sed adhuc manus ejus extenta.

18. Quoniam succensa est velut ignis impietas; vepres et spinas devorabit. Postea exardebit in condensa sylvæ; et elevabitur fumus ascendentis.

19. Præ ira Iehovæ exercituum obscurabitur terra, et fiet populus

and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

20. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

21. Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: *and* they together *shall be* against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

quasi cibus ignis. Nemo fratri suo parcet.

20. Rapiet quisque ad dexteram, et esuriet; comedet ad sinistram, et non saturabitur: quisque carnem brachii sui devorabit;

21. Menasse Ephraim, et Ephraim Menasse; pariter ipsi contra Iudam. Nec in hoc toto aversus erit furor ejus; sed manus ejus adhuc extenta.

1. *Yet the darkness shall not be.* He begins to comfort the wretched by the hope of alleviation, that they may not be swallowed up by the huge mass of distresses. Many take these words in quite an opposite meaning, that is, as a threatening which denounces against the Jews a heavier affliction than that with which Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 29) and Shalmanezer (2 Kings xvii. 6) afflicted them. The former inflicted a heavy calamity, the latter inflicted one still heavier, for he carried the twelve tribes into captivity, and blotted out the name of the nation. Some think that he now foretells the heaviest calamity of all, for if it be compared with the former two, it exceeds both of them. Though I am not prepared to reject this view, for it does not want plausibility, yet I rather favour a different opinion. The other interpretation is indeed more plausible, that the Prophet intended to deprive hypocrites of every enjoyment, that they might not imagine that this calamity would quickly pass away like a storm as the others had done, for it would be utterly destructive; and so we shall take the particle כִּי (*ki*) in its literal meaning.[1]

But in my opinion it is most appropriate to view it as a consolation, in which he begins to mitigate what he had said about that frightful *darkness* and *driving*, (Isa. viii. 22,) and, by allaying the bitterness of those punishments, encourages them to expect the favour of God. As if he had said, "*and yet*, amidst that shocking calamity which the Jews shall en-

[1] The Hebrew particle כִּי, (*ki*,) which is placed at the beginning of this verse, is rendered in the English version by *Nevertheless;* but CALVIN says that he is willing to translate it *for*.—*Ed.*

dure, *the darkness will not be such as when* the land of Israel was afflicted, first, by Tiglath-pileser, (2 Kings xv. 29,) and afterwards more grievously by Shalmanezer," (2 Kings xvii. 6.) Amidst so great extremities believers might otherwise have fainted, if their hearts had not been cheered by some consolation. Isaiah therefore directs his discourse to them lest they should think that they were ruined, for he intimates that the chastisements which are now to be inflicted will be lighter than those which came before. That this is the natural interpretation will quickly appear from what immediately follows.

But why does the Prophet say that this calamity, which was far more dreadful, would be more mild and gentle? For Jerusalem was to be razed, the temple thrown down, and the sacrifices abolished, which had remained untouched during the former calamities. It might be thought that these were the severest of all, and that the former, in comparison of them, were light. But it ought to be observed, that while in the former instances there was no promise, an explicit promise was added to this threatening. By this alone can temptations be overcome and chastisements be rendered light. By this seasoning alone, I say, are our afflictions alleviated; and all who are destitute of it must despair. But if, by means of it, the Lord strengthen us by holding out the hope of assistance, there is no affliction so heavy that we shall not reckon it to be light.

This may be made plain by a comparison. A man may happen to be drowned in a small stream, and yet, though he had fallen into the open sea, if he had got hold of a plank he might have been rescued and brought on shore. In like manner the slightest calamities will overwhelm us if we are deprived of God's favour; but if we relied on the word of God, we might come out of the heaviest calamity safe and uninjured.

As to the words, some take מוּעָף (*mūgnāph*) for an adjective, as if the Prophet said, *It shall not be darkened;* but the feminine pronoun which immediately follows, בָּהּ (*bāhh*), *in her*, does not allow us to refer this to men. It is more accurately described by others to be a substantive noun; and,

therefore, I have resolved to render it literally, *there shall not be darkness* in Judea *according to the affliction of the time when,* &c. Some explain הקל (*hēkăl*) to mean that the land was *relieved of a burden,* in consequence of the people having been carried into captivity; but this is altogether at variance with the Prophet's meaning, and does not agree with what follows; for it is immediately added that the sea-coast has been *more grievously afflicted* by a second calamity. There can be no doubt, therefore, that this verb corresponds to the other verb הכביד, (*hikbīd.*)[1] Not more than a small part of the kingdom having been afflicted by Tiglath-pileser, the calamity which he brought upon it is said to be light as compared with the second which was inflicted by Shalmanezer.

By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. He calls it *the way of the sea,* because *Galilee* was adjoining to the coast of the Mediterranean *Sea,* and on one side it was bounded by the course of the *Jordan.* It is called *Galilee of the Gentiles,* not only because it was contiguous to Tyre and Sidon, but because it contained a great multitude of *Gentiles,* who were mingled with the Jews; for from the time that Solomon granted this country to King Hiram, (1 Kings ix. 11,) it could never be subdued in such a manner as not to have some part of it possessed by *the Gentiles.*

2. *The people walking in darkness hath seen a great light.* He speaks of future events in the past tense, and thus brings them before the immediate view of the people, that in the destruction of the city, in their captivity, and in what appeared to be their utter destruction, they may behold the *light* of God. It may therefore be summed up in this manner: "Even *in darkness,* nay, in *death* itself, there is nevertheless good ground of hope; for the power of God is sufficient to restore life to his people, when they appear to be already

[1] הקל (*hēkal*) signifies literally *to make light,* and in accordance with an English idiom, sometimes denotes figuratively, *to make light of.* Stock's rendering is, *he made vile,* answering to Lowth's, *he debased.* Both agree in rendering הכביד (*hikbīd*) *he hath made it glorious.* The English version concurs with CALVIN in rendering הקל, (*hēkal,*) *he lightly afflicted,* and הכביד, (*hikbīd,*) *he did more grievously afflict.—Ed.*

dead." Matthew, who quotes this passage, appears to torture it to a different meaning; for he says that this prediction was fulfilled when Christ preached along the sea-coast. (Matt. iv. 16.) But if we take a just view of the comparison, it will be found that Matthew has applied this passage to Christ correctly, and in its true meaning. Yet it does not appear that the view generally given by our commentators is a successful elucidation of the passage; for they merely assert that it belongs to the kingdom of Christ, but do not assign a reason, or show how it accords with this passage. If, therefore, we wish to ascertain the true meaning of this passage, we must bring to our recollection what has been already stated, that the Prophet, when he speaks of bringing back the people from Babylon, does not look to a single age, but includes all the rest, till Christ came and brought the most complete deliverance to his people. The deliverance from Babylon was but a prelude to the restoration of the Church, and was intended to last, not for a few years only, but till Christ should come and bring true salvation, not only to their bodies, but likewise to their souls. When we shall have made a little progress in reading Isaiah, we shall find that this was his ordinary custom.

Having spoken of the captivity in Babylon, which held out the prospect of a very heavy calamity, he shows that this calamity will be *lighter* than that which Israel formerly endured; because the Lord had fixed a term and limit to that calamity, namely, *seventy years*, (Jer. xxv. 11, 12, and xxix. 10,) after the expiration of which the *light* of the Lord would shine on them. By this confident hope of deliverance, therefore, he encourages their hearts when overpowered by fear, that they might not be distressed beyond measure; and thus he made a distinction between the Jews and the Israelites, to whom the expectation of a deliverance so near was not promised. Though the Prophets had given to the elect remnant some taste of the mercy of God, yet, in consequence of the redemption of Israel being, as it were, an addition to the redemption of Judah, and dependent on it, justly does the Prophet now declare that a new *light* has been exhibited; because God hath determined to redeem

his people. Appropriately and skilfully, too, does Matthew extend the rays of *light* to *Galilee* and *the land of Zebulun* (Matt. iv. 15.)

In the land of the shadow of death. He now compares the captivity in Babylon to *darkness* and *death;* for those who were kept there, were wretched and miserable, and altogether like dead men; as Ezekiel also relates their speech, *Dead men shall arise out of the graves.* (Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. Their condition, therefore, was such as if no brightness, no ray of *light,* had shone on them. Yet he shows that this will not prevent them from enjoying *light,* and recovering their former liberty; and that liberty he extends, not to a short period, but, as we have already said, to the time of Christ.

Thus it is customary with the Apostles to borrow arguments from the Prophets, and to show their real use and design. In this manner Paul quotes (Rom. ix. 25) that passage from Hosea, *I will call them my people which were not my people,* (Hos. ii. 13,) and applies it to the calling of the Gentiles, though strictly it was spoken of the Jews; and he shows that it was fulfilled when the Lord brought the Gentiles into the Church. Thus, when the people might be said to be buried in that captivity, they differed in no respect from the Gentiles; and since both were in the same condition, it is reasonable to believe that this passage relates, not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles also. Nor must it be viewed as referring to outward misery only, but to the *darkness* of eternal *death,* in which souls are plunged, till they come forth to spiritual light; for unquestionably we lie buried in *darkness,* till Christ shine on us by the doctrine of his word. Hence also Paul exhorts, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light* (Eph. v. 14.) If therefore we extend the commencement of the deliverance from the return from Babylon down to the coming of Christ, on whom all liberty and all bestowal of blessings depends, we shall understand the true meaning of this passage, which otherwise has not been satisfactorily explained by commentators.

3. *Thou hast multiplied.* This passage is somewhat ob

scure, both in itself, and on account of the diversity of interpretations; for it appears to be absurd to say that *the joy was not increased,* seeing that he immediately afterwards adds, *they rejoiced.* On this account the Jews interpret לֹא (*lo*) not negatively, but as if ו (*vau*) had been substituted for א (*aleph*); for sometimes, though rarely, it has this meaning in the Scriptures.[1] (Exod. xxi. 8.) The Jews do this, because they cannot reconcile the words of the Prophet with their opinion. Again, some view these words as referring to Sennacherib, because his army, though it was large, brought him no ground of *joy,* but rather of grief. (2 Kings xix. 35.) Others explain it as relating to the Church, and justly, but mistake the method of applying it; for they think that the Prophet said this because believers, as long as they live, are subject to numerous and diversified afflictions. Others go still farther from the point, by saying that the conversion of the Gentiles, which will enlarge the Church, *will not bring joy* to the Jews and the ancient synagogue.

But I cannot approve of any of those interpretations, and therefore I interpret it in this manner. As the Prophet, in the beginning of the chapter, had made a preliminary statement, that this blessing of redemption was greater than all other blessings, though it might appear to be unworthy of being so highly extolled, on account of the small number of those who were redeemed; so now he repeats the same comparison, or one not very different from it, namely, that this favour of God would be more remarkable than when he had formerly *multiplied his people.* This might at first sight be thought to be highly inappropriate; for if we compare the

[1] The Author's meaning must be, not that א (*aleph*) ever becomes the third singular pronominal affix, but that in Exod. xxi. 8, to which he refers, ו and not א is probably the true reading. A better illustration might have been found in Psalm c. 3, on which the reader may consult a valuable note by the editor. (Com. on the Psalms, vol. iv.) In all the three cases (Exod. xxi. 8; Ps. c. 3; Is. ix. 3) the *Keri,* or conjectural emendation, has strong internal evidence to recommend it above the *Ketib,* or reading that stands in the copies which have come down to us. Another method of solving the difficulty is exceedingly ingenious, and consists in turning the first part of the verse into the form of a question. *Hast thou multiplied the nation, and hast thou not increased the joy?—Ed.*

condition of the Jewish kingdom, before the Babylonish captivity, with its condition after the return from it, we may be led to think that the period during which its ancient possession remained unimpaired was a season of greater prosperity. It was but a small remnant that returned in comparison of that multitude which had been carried away. Besides, they had not the free possession of their land, but might be said to be tenants at will; and they had to pay tribute to the Persians, and retained hardly any semblance of their former rank. Who, therefore, would not have preferred that prosperous reign which had been enjoyed by the family of David to that condition?

But the Prophet declares that this latter condition, though it may appear to be greatly inferior, and even more wretched ought to be preferred to that which was prosperous and splendid, and shows that it will yield greater *joy* than when they had an abundant share of wealth and of all kinds of possessions. This was also testified by Haggai, *that the glory of the latter temple would be greater than the glory of the former*, (Hag. ii. 9,) though at first sight it might appear to be far otherwise. It is as if Isaiah had said, "There never was greater joy, though the multitude of the people was greater. Though we are few and contemptible in number yet by the light with which thou shinest on us thou hast cheered us to such a degree that no joy of our former condition can be compared with the present." For that redemption might be regarded as a prelude to the full and perfect salvation which was at length obtained through Christ.

Before thee. He means that the *joy* was true and complete, not slight or temporary. Men often rejoice, but with a deceitful and transitory *joy*, which is followed by mourning and tears. He affirms that this *joy* has its roots so deeply laid, that it can never perish or be destroyed. Such is also the import of the phrase *before thee;* for nothing cheers the godly so much as when the face of God shines sweetly on them. They are not like irreligious men, who are carried hither and thither by a blind and uncertain *joy*, but they have that which alone gives ground for full joy, their reliance on God's fatherly kindness. Perhaps also the Prophet

intended to allude to those words which frequently occur in the writings of Moses: *Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God.* (Lev. xxiii. 40; Deut. xii. 12, 18.) For though the subject there spoken of is the Tabernacle, still the mode of expression is fitly applied to the present occasion, that the *joy* of a believing people will not be irreligious, but will arise from acknowledging God, and beholding him by the eyes of faith to be *the author of salvation.* (Heb. v. 9.)

Others explain it more ingeniously, that inwardly believers rejoice *before God* in their consciences, because in the world grief and sighing continually awaits them. Though this is true, yet a more natural meaning is drawn from the connection of the passage, namely, that believers whom God shall redeem will possess true *joy;* because they will have been instructed by undoubted proof that he is their Father, so that they may freely boast that they will always be safe under his guidance; and, therefore, as I lately mentioned, it denotes continuance.

According to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoils. The comparisons of *Harvest* and *Victory,* by which he heightens the amount of the joy, are sufficiently plain. Now, hence it is evident what Christ brings to us, namely, a full and perfect joy, of which we cannot in any way be robbed or deprived, though various storms and tempests should arise, and though we should be weighed down by every kind of afflictions. However weak and feeble we may be, still we ought to be glad and joyful; for the ground of our joy does not lie in numbers, or wealth, or outward splendour, but in spiritual happiness, which we obtain through the word of Christ.

For thou hast broken his burdensome yoke. He explains the cause of *the joy,* that believers, when they have been delivered from a frightful and cruel tyranny, will feel as if they had been rescued from death. In order to illustrate the grace of God, he reminds them how shameful and burdensome was the slavery with which the Jews had been oppressed and afflicted; and this is his object in heaping up the expressions, *the yoke of the shoulder, the staff of the shoulder, the rod of the oppressor* or *overseer.* Whatever may

be our excessive effeminacy or cowardice, while we actually feel afflictions, yet as soon as they are gone, we easily come to forget them. That the redeemed people may not think lightly of the favour of God, the Prophet bids them consider how bitter and mournful was the slavery, when they groaned under a heavy *yoke* or triumphal car, when the *staff* was laid on their shoulders, and they were oppressed by tyrannical rule; and therefore their deliverance ought justly to make them more glad and joyful.

Next, he extolls the excellence of this favour on another ground, that God has openly displayed his hand from heaven. For this purpose he adduces an ancient and memorable instance. As God had formerly overthrown the Midianites, without the help of men, by a wonderful and amazing method, (Jud. vii. 21,) so now there will be a similar and illustrious display of power; for God will deliver his people from a cruel tyranny, when not one of the wretched Jews will venture to lift a finger. Now, it ought to be observed that God sometimes assists his people in such a manner as to make use of ordinary methods; but when he sees that this hinders men from beholding his hand, which may be said to be concealed, he sometimes works alone, and by evident miracles, that nothing may prevent or obscure the manifestation of his power. Thus in this victory of Gideon, when the enemies were routed without any agency of men, the arm of God openly appeared. For what had Gideon but the noise of pitchers, which could scarcely have driven away mice, and a small band of men, against a vast army, and, instead of weapons, a useless scarecrow? To this deliverance therefore, he compares the future deliverance of the people, in which the hand of God will be not less openly and illustriously displayed.

Some explain this passage as relating merely to the law which might not inappropriately have been called *a burdensome yoke*, and *a rod* lying on the shoulders. But that interpretation is unsuitable; for it would give to the Prophet the appearance of having suddenly broken off from his subject, and would be a violent torture of this passage. We must therefore attend to that arrangement which I formerly

noticed, namely, that when God brought his people out of Babylon, he continued that blessing of deliverance till Christ. The meaning therefore is, "Thou hast broken those burdens by which thy people were unjustly and cruelly oppressed."

Others apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem during the reign of Vespasian, but they have no argument on their side. Almost all the Jews refer it to Hezekiah, when in this manner the Lord delivered the city from the siege of Sennacherib, and cut off his army. (2 Kings xix. 35; Is. xxxvii. 36.) But that interpretation could not be admitted, for Hezekiah did not reign tyrannically over the Jews. Besides, at that time the Lord rescued the people from fear and danger, and not from slavery. Hence it is evident that this prediction had a more distant object, and that the interpretation which I have given to this passage is just and reasonable.

5. *For every battle.* Here commentators are nearly agreed that Isaiah intended to contrast the victory which God was about to give to his people with other victories. Others conquer by making a great slaughter of the enemies, but here the Lord will conquer by his own hand alone. He expresses more fully what he had said, *As in the day of Midian.* (Verse 4.) The Lord therefore, he says, will not employ the agency of a great multitude, but will achieve a victory for himself from heaven. When the Lord acts by himself, every covering is removed, and we perceive more clearly that he is the Author of our life and salvation.

Now, since there is a contrast which expresses the difference between the ordinary mode of warfare and the miracle of redemption, the copulative ו, (*vau,*) in the middle of the verse, ought to be rendered *but;* as if he had said, that it is usually amidst the confusion of the battle that enemies are hewn down: but God will act in a very different manner; for he will destroy the enemies of the Church, as if he sent down lightning from heaven, or suddenly struck them by thunderbolts. It may perhaps be thought better to adopt the opinion of those who explain the second clause as a continuation of the first, that *all warriors will be with trembling and with burning fire.* But the former meaning is more appropriate, and is likewise supported by the words of the

Prophet. Hence it is evident that the present subject is not merely the deliverance which the people obtained from Cyrus, permitting them to return to their native country, but that these words must be viewed as extending to the kingdom of Christ.

6. *For unto us a child is born.* Isaiah now argues from the design, to show why this deliverance ought to be preferred to the rest of God's benefits, namely, because not only will God bring back the people from captivity, but he will place Christ on his royal throne, that under him supreme and everlasting happiness may be enjoyed. Thus he affirms that the kindness of God will not be temporary, for it includes the whole of that intermediate period during which the Church was preserved till the coming of Christ. Nor is it wonderful if the Prophet makes a sudden transition from the return of the ancient people to the full restoration of the Church, which took place many centuries afterwards; for in our observations on chapter vii. 14,[1] we have remarked, that there being no other way that God is reconciled to us than through the Mediator, all the promises are founded on him; and that on this account it is customary with the Prophets, whenever they wish to encourage the hearts of believers by good hope, to bring this forward as a pledge or earnest. To this must be added, that the return from the captivity in Babylon was the commencement of the renovation of the Church, which was completed when Christ appeared; and consequently there is no absurdity in an uninterrupted succession. Justly, therefore, does Isaiah teach that they ought not to confine their attention to the present benefit, but should consider the end, and refer everything to it. "This is your highest happiness, that you have been rescued from death, not only that you may live in the land of Canaan, but that you may arrive at the kingdom of God."

Hence we learn that we ought not to swallow up the benefits which we receive from God, so as instantly to forget them, but should raise our minds to Christ, otherwise the advantage will be small, and the joy will be transitory; because they will not lead us to taste the sweetness of a

[1] See page 244.

Father's love, unless we keep in remembrance the free election of God, which is ratified in Christ. In short, the Prophet does not wish that this people should be wholly occupied with the joy occasioned by the outward and short-lived freedom which they had obtained, but that they should look at the end, that is, at the preservation of the Church, till Christ, the only Redeemer, should appear; for he ought to be the ground and perfection of all our joy.

A child is born. The Jews impudently torture this passage, for they interpret it as relating to Hezekiah, though he had been born before this prediction was uttered. But he speaks of it as something new and unexpected; and it is even a promise, intended to arouse believers to the expectation of a future event; and therefore there can be no hesitation in concluding that he describes *a child* that was afterwards to be *born.*

He is called the *Son* of God. Although in the Hebrew language the word *son,* I admit, has a wide acceptation, yet that is when something is added to it. Every man is the *son* of his father: those who are a hundred years old are called (Is. lxv. 20) *the sons of a hundred years;* wicked men are called *the sons of wickedness;* those who are blessed are called *the sons of blessing;* and Isaiah called a fruitful hill *the son of fatness.* (Is. v. 1.) But *son,* without any addition, can mean none else than *the Son of God;* and it is now ascribed to Christ, by way of eminence, (κατ' ἐξοχὴν,) in order to inform us, that by this striking mark he is distinguished from the rest of mankind. Nor can it be doubted that Isaiah referred to that well-known prediction, which was in the mouth of every person, *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son,* (2 Sam. vii. 14,) as it is afterwards repeated, *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.* (Ps. ii. 7.) Had it not been commonly and generally known that the Messiah would be the *Son* of God, it would have been foolish and unmeaning for Isaiah simply to call him *the Son.* Accordingly, this title is derived from the former prediction, from which the Apostle reasons, that the excellence of Christ exalts him above all the angels. (Heb. i. 5.)

Now, though in the person of *a child* Christ might have a

mean appearance, still the designation of *Son* points out his high rank. Yet I do not deny that he might have been called the *Son* of David, but it is more natural to apply it to him as God. The titles which follow are still less applicable to Hezekiah. I shall soon give an ample refutation of the sophistry by which the Jews attempt to evade this passage. Let them slander as they may, the matter is sufficient plain to all who will calmly and soberly examine it.

A Son hath been given to us. There is weight in what he now adds, that this *Son* was *given* to the people, in order to inform the Jews that their salvation and that of the whole Church is contained in the person of Christ. And this *giving* is one of the chief articles of our faith; for it would have been of little avail to us, that Christ was *born*, if he had not likewise been our own. What this *child* will be, and what is his rank, he declares in the following statements.

And the government hath been laid upon his shoulder. To suppose, as some do, that this is an allusion to the cross of Christ is manifestly childish. Christ *carried the cross* on his shoulders, (John xix. 17,) and by the cross he gained a splendid triumph over *the prince of this world.* (John xiv. 30.) But as *the government* is here said to have been *laid on his shoulders* in the same sense in which we shall see that *the key of the house of David was laid on the shoulders* of Eliakim, (Is. xxii. 22,) we need not go far to seek ingenious expositions. Yet I agree with those who think that there is an indirect contrast between *the government* which the Redeemer *bore on his shoulders* and *the staff of the shoulder* which was just now mentioned; for it agrees well, and is not liable to any objections. He therefore shows that the Messiah will be different from indolent kings, who leave off business and cares, and live at their ease; for he will be able to *bear the burden.* Thus he asserts the superiority and grandeur of his government, because by his own power Christ will obtain homage to himself, and he will discharge his office, not only with the tips of his fingers, but with his full strength.

And his name shall be called. Though יִקְרָא, (*yĭkrā*,) *he shall call,* be an active verb, I have not hesitated to translate

it in a passive sense; for the meaning is the same as if he had made use of the plural number, *they shall call.* We have a French idiom that resembles it, *on appellera,* literally, *one shall call,* that is, *he shall be called.* The Jews apply it to God, and read it continously, *he shall call his name Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* But it is very evident that this proceeds from a desire, or rather from a licentious eagerness, to obscure the glory of Christ; for if they had not laboured with excessive keenness to rob him of his Godhead, the passage would run on very smoothly as interpreted by our divines. Besides, what necessity was there for ascribing to God those attributes, if the Prophet meant nothing more than that God gave a name to Messiah? For the attributes which are usually ascribed to God are either perpetual or accommodated to the case in hand, neither of which suppositions can here be admitted. Again, it would have been an interruption of the regular order to insert the name of God in the midst of various titles, but it ought to have run thus, *the mighty God, Wonderful, Counsellor, shall call.* Now, I do not see how the name יועץ (*yōgnētz*) can be applied absolutely to God, for it belongs to *counsellors* who attend kings or other persons. If any obstinate wrangler shall contend for the notion of the Rabbins, he will show nothing but his own impudence. Let us follow the plain and natural meaning.

Wonderful. It ought to be observed that those titles are not foreign to the subject, but are adapted to the case in hand, for the Prophet describes what Christ will show himself to be towards believers. He does not speak of Christ's mysterious essence, but applauds his excellencies, which we perceive and experience by faith. This ought to be the more carefully considered, because the greater part of men are satisfied with his mere name, and do not observe his power and energy, though that ought to be chiefly regarded.

By the first title he arouses the minds of the godly to earnest attention, that they may expect from Christ something more excellent than what we see in the ordinary course of God's works, as if he had said, that *in Christ are hidden* the invaluable *treasures* of *wonderful* things. (Col. ii. 3.) And,

indeed, the redemption which he has brought surpasses even the creation of the world. It amounts to this, that the grace of God, which will be exhibited in Christ, exceeds all miracles.

Counsellor. The reason of this second title is, that the Redeemer will come endowed with absolute wisdom. Now, let us remember what I have just noticed, that the Prophet does not here reason about the hidden essence of Christ, but about the power which he displays towards us. It is not, therefore, because he knows all his Father's secrets that the Prophet calls him *Counsellor*, but rather because, *proceeding from the bosom of the Father*, (John i. 18,) he is in every respect the highest and most perfect teacher. In like manner we are not permitted to get wisdom but from his Gospel, and this contributes also to the praise of the Gospel, for it contains the perfect wisdom of God, as Paul frequently shows. (1 Cor. i. 24, 30; Eph. i. 17; Col. i. 9.) All that is necessary for salvation is opened up by Christ in such a manner, and explained with such familiarity, that he addresses the disciples *no longer as servants but as friends.* (John xv. 14, 15.)

The mighty God. אֵל (*El*) is one of the names of God, though derived from *strength*, so that it is sometimes added as an attribute. But here it is evidently a proper name, because Isaiah is not satisfied with it, and in addition to it employs the adjective גִּבּוֹר, (*gibbōr*,) which means *strong.* And indeed if Christ had not been *God*, it would have been unlawful to glory in him; for it is written, *Cursed be he that trusteth in man.* (Jer. xvii. 5.) We must, therefore, meet with the majesty of God in him, so that there truly dwells in him that which cannot without sacrilege be attributed to a creature.

He is, therefore, called *the mighty God*, for the same reason that he was formerly called *Immanuel.* (Isa. vii. 14.) For if we find in Christ nothing but the flesh and nature of man, our glorying will be foolish and vain, and our hope will rest on an uncertain and insecure foundation; but if he shows himself to be to us *God* and *the mighty God*, we may now rely on him with safety. With good reason does he call

him *strong* or *mighty*, because our contest is with the devil, death, and sin, (Eph. vi. 12,) enemies too powerful and strong, by whom we would be immediately vanquished, if the *strength* of Christ had not rendered us invincible. Thus we learn from this title that there is in Christ abundance of protection for defending our salvation, so that we desire nothing beyond him; for he is *God*, who is pleased to show himself *strong* on our behalf. This application may be regarded as the key to this and similar passages, leading us to distinguish between Christ's mysterious essence and the power by which he hath revealed himself to us.

The father of the age. The Greek translator has added μέλλοντος, *future*;[1] and, in my opinion, the translation is correct, for it denotes *eternity*, unless it be thought better to view it as denoting "perpetual duration," or "an endless succession of ages," lest any one should improperly limit it to the heavenly life, which is still *hidden* from us. (Col. iii. 3.) True, the Prophet includes it, and even declares that Christ will come, in order to bestow immortality on his people; but as believers, even in this world, *pass from death to life*, (John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14,) this world is embraced by the eternal condition of the Church.

The name *Father* is put for *Author*, because Christ preserves the existence of his Church through all ages, and bestows immortality on the body and on the individual members. Hence we conclude how transitory our condition is, apart from him; for, granting that we were to live for a very long period after the ordinary manner of men, what after all will

[1] Πατὴρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, *Father of the future age.* In the *Messiah*, Pope has beautifully introduced this passage—

> "Mankind shall thus his guardian care engage,
> The promised Father of the future age."

That admirable poem appeared originally in the Spectator, No. 378, where the abundant foot-notes direct the reader to the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, as the source from which the poet has drawn his finest strokes and happiest illustrations. It is deeply to be regretted that the recent editors leave out those references, so valuable in the estimation of the author, that, in the edition prepared by his own hand, the finest lines in Virgil's *Pollio* are placed side by side with the quotations from Isaiah, "under the mutual disadvantage of a literal translation," for the express purpose of showing the immeasurable superiority of the Hebrew prophet.— *Ed.*

be the value of our long life? We ought, therefore, to elevate our minds to that blessed and everlasting life, *which as yet we see not*, but which we possess *by hope and faith.* (Rom. viii. 25.)

The Prince of Peace. This is the last title, and the Prophet declares by it that the coming of Christ will be the cause of full and perfect happiness, or, at least, of calm and blessed safety. In the Hebrew language *peace* often signifies *prosperity*, for of all blessings not one is better or more desirable than *peace.* The general meaning is, that all who submit to the dominion of Christ will lead a quiet and blessed life in obedience to him. Hence it follows that life, without this King, is restless and miserable.

But we must also take into consideration the nature of this *peace.* It is the same with that of the kingdom, for it resides chiefly in the consciences; otherwise we must be engaged in incessant conflicts and liable to daily attacks. Not only, therefore, does he promise outward *peace*, but that peace by which we return to a state of favour with God, who were formerly at enmity with him. *Justified by faith*, says Paul, *we have peace with God.* (Rom. v. 1.) Now, when Christ shall have brought composure to our minds, the same spiritual *peace* will hold the highest place *in our hearts*, (Philip. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15,) so that we will patiently endure every kind of adversity, and from the same fountain will likewise flow outward prosperity, which is nothing else than the effect of the blessing of God.

Now, to apply this for our own instruction, whenever any distrust arises, and all means of escape are taken away from us, whenever, in short, it appears to us that everything is in a ruinous condition, let us recall to our remembrance that Christ is called *Wonderful*, because he has inconceivable methods of assisting us, and because his power is far beyond what we are able to conceive. When we need counsel, let us remember that he is the *Counsellor.* When we need strength, let us remember that he is *Mighty* and *Strong.* When new terrors spring up suddenly every instant, and when many deaths threaten us from various quarters, let us rely on that *eternity* of which he is with good reason called

the Father, and by the same comfort let us learn to soothe all temporal distresses. When we are inwardly tossed by various tempests, and when Satan attempts to disturb our consciences, let us remember that Christ is *The Prince of Peace,* and that it is easy for him quickly to allay all our uneasy feelings. Thus will these titles confirm us more and more in the faith of Christ, and fortify us against Satan and against hell itself.

7. *To the increase of the government there will be no end.* He begins to explain and confirm what he had formerly said, that Christ is *The Prince of Peace,* by saying that his government is extended to every age, and is perpetual; that *there will be no end to the government or to peace.* This was also repeated by Daniel, who predicts that his *kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.* (Dan. vii. 27.) Gabriel also alluded to it when he carried the message to the virgin; and he gave the true exposition of this passage, for it cannot be understood to refer to any other than to Christ. *He shall reign,* says he, *over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* (Luke i. 33.) We see that the mightiest *governments* of this world, as if they had been built on a *slippery* foundation, (Ps. lxxiii. 18,) are unexpectedly overturned and suddenly fall. How fickle and changeable all the kingdoms under heaven are, we learn from history and from daily examples. This *government* alone is unchangeable and eternal.

Now, this continuance, of which Isaiah now speaks, consists of two parts. It belongs both to time and to quality. Though the kingdom of Christ is in such a condition that it appears as if it were about to perish at every moment, yet God not only protects and defends it, but also extends its boundaries far and wide, and then preserves and carries it forward in uninterrupted progression to *eternity.* We ought firmly to believe this, that the frequency of those shocks by which the Church is shaken may not weaken our faith, when we learn that, amidst the mad outcry and violent attacks of enemies, the *kingdom* of Christ stands firm through the invincible power of God, so that, though the whole world should oppose and resist, it will remain through

all ages. We must not judge of its stability from the present appearances of things, but from the promise, which assures us of its *continuance* and of its constant increase.

And to the peace. To *the government* he adds the eternity of *the peace*, for the one cannot be separated from the other. It is impossible that Christ should be *King* without also keeping his people in calm and blessed *peace*, and enriching them with every blessing. But as they are daily exposed to innumerable vexations, endure fierce attacks, and are tossed and perplexed by fears and anxieties, they ought to cultivate that *peace* of Christ, which holds the highest place *in their hearts*, (Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15,) that they may remain unhurt, and may even retain their composure amidst the destruction of the whole world.

In the word לְמַרְבֵּה, (*lĕmarbēh*,) contrary to the usual manner of writing, there is the close form of ם (*mem*).[1] Some think that it denotes the slavery by which the Jewish people should be oppressed till the coming of Christ. Others think that that nation, on account of its treachery, was excluded by this mark from having any share in this *kingdom*. I do not find fault with these views. Indeed, we can hardly assert that the Prophet wrote it in this manner; but yet, since this is the form in which it has come into our hands, and since the Rabbins were so close observers of the minutest portion of a letter, we cannot avoid thinking that this was not rashly done. And if we admit that the Prophet intentionally wrote it in this manner, I think that it conveyed this useful instruction, that believers should not imagine that the splendour of Christ's kingdom would consist in

[1] This means that what is usually called *Final Mem* (ם) is here used, instead of the form which the letter usually takes in the beginning or middle of a word. A Greek scholar would have been startled at seeing *ς* instead of *σ* at the beginning of a syllable. The peculiarity now in question must originally have been accidental, but took place at so early a period, and was so extensively copied, that no transcriber ventured to replace the ordinary form of the letter. At length it gave rise to the following Masoretic note: מ סתומה באמצע תיבה, that is, *Shut Mem in the middle of the word*. The Jewish Rabbins have expended on it many conjectures and much useless learning. In their writings they excite no surprise, but it is impossible not to regret that they should have had even a momentary influence on the calm and sober judgment of CALVIN, who so heartily despised idle sophistry and frivolous remarks.—*Ed.*

outward pomp, or cherish vain hopes of worldly triumphs, but should only expect, amidst various calamities, an unseen extension of the kingdom, because it had been promised.

Upon the throne of David. A promise having been made to *David* that the Redeemer would spring from his seed, (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13,) and his kingdom having been nothing else than an image or faint shadow of that more perfect and truly blessed state which God had determined to establish by the hand of his Son, the Prophets, in order to remind the people of that remarkable miracle, usually call Christ *the Son of David.* (Jer. xxiii. 5, and xxxiii. 15.) Though the name of such a holy and upright king was justly beloved and revered, yet believers esteemed more highly the promised restoration to full salvation, and even among the most ignorant persons that prediction was universally remembered, and its truth and authenticity were considered to be clear and undoubted. I shall collect but a few of the passages in which the Prophets promise to an afflicted people restoration in the person of *David* or of *his Son.* (Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; Hos. iii. 5.) Sometimes they foretell that *David,* who was already dead, would be king. In like manner Isaiah, in this passage, intimates that he brings forward nothing that is new, but only reminds them of that which God had formerly promised about the perpetuity of *the kingdom.* Indirectly also he insinuates what Amoz more plainly states, that Christ will *again raise up the throne which for some time had been fallen.* (Amos ix. 11.)

To order it, and to establish it with judgment and with righteousness. He describes the quality of *the kingdom,* but by a comparison drawn from earthly governments; for he says that Christ will be a King, *to order and establish his kingdom with judgment and with righteousness.* These are the means by which earthly governments prosper and take deep roots; but those which are only administered by fear and violence cannot be lasting. Since, therefore, *justice* is the best guardian of *kingdoms* and *governments,* and since the happiness of the whole of the people depends on it, by this clause Isaiah shows that the *kingdom* of Christ will be the model of the best kind of *government.*

Judgment and *righteousness* do not here relate to outward affairs of state. We must observe the analogy between the kingdom of Christ and its qualities; for, being spiritual, it is established by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a word, all these things must be viewed as referring to the inner man, that is, when we are regenerated by God to true *righteousness*. Outward *righteousness* indeed follows afterwards, but it must be preceded by that renovation of the mind and heart. We are not Christ's, therefore, unless we follow what is good and just, and bear on our hearts the impress of that *righteousness* which hath been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Henceforth even for ever. This must be understood, I think, to refer to the perpetuity of *righteousness* and doctrine rather than of *the kingdom*, lest we should imagine that his laws resemble the statutes of kings and princes, which are in force for three days, or for a short period, and are continually renewed, and soon become old again, but that we may know that their obligation is everlasting; for they have been established, as Zecharias says, *that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.* (Luke i. 74, 75.) As Christ's kingdom is everlasting, because *he dieth no more*, (Rom. vi. 9,) so it follows that *righteousness* and judgment will be everlasting, for they cannot be changed by any length of time.

The zeal of the LORD *of hosts will perform this.* By *zeal* I understand that ardent desire which God will display in preserving his Church, by removing all difficulties and obstructions which might otherwise have hindered its redemption. When we engage in any difficult undertaking, our earnestness, and the warmth of our feelings, overcome the difficulties which present themselves to baffle or retard our attempts. In like manner Isaiah shows that God is inflamed with an uncommon and extraordinary desire to promote the salvation of the Church, so that if believers cannot measure by their own capacity what he has just now promised, still they ought not to cease to entertain confident hope, for the manner of it is wonderful and inconceivable. In short, he intimates that God will come with no light or slow arm to redeem his Church, for he will be all on flame

with amazing love of believers, and anxiety about their salvation.

8. *The* LORD *hath sent a word.* Here he relates a new prediction, for I think that this discourse is separated from the former, because the Prophet now returns to speak of the future condition of the kingdom of *Israel*, which was at that time hostile to the Jews. Now, we know that the Jews had good reason for being alarmed at the forces and power of that kingdom, especially when it had made a league with the Syrians, because they saw that they had not sufficient strength to oppose them. In order, therefore, to yield comfort to the godly, he shows what will be the future condition of the kingdom of *Israel.*

By *Jacob* and *Israel* he means the same thing; but the diversity of expression is elegant, and is intended to show that the wicked gain nothing by their opposition, when they endeavour either to turn away from them, or to alter the judgment of God. He alludes to the speech of those who think that they can escape by means of their witticisms, and who turn into jest and sport all that is threatened by the Prophets; just as if one were to attempt to drive away a storm by the breath of his mouth. It is, therefore, an ironical admission, as if he had said, "In your opinion, what God pronounces against you will fall on others; but all the threatenings which he utters against *Jacob* will *light upon Israel.*"

To *send* means to appoint. The preposition ב (*beth*) means IN *Jacob himself.* The word of God must dwell and rest *in him*, for it cannot vanish away without producing any effect. This is what he afterwards lays down in other words, "*My word shall not return to me void;* that is, because it is an effectual publication of that which I have once decreed." (Is. lv. 11.) By the word, *it hath fallen*,[1] he points out the certainty of the effect and result; as if he had said, "I do not conjecture these things, nor do I contrive them out of my own head; but God hath spoken, who cannot be deceived, and cannot change."

9. *And the people shall know.* By the word *people* I

[1] *It hath lighted.*—Eng. Ver.

understand, not the Jews, but rather the Israelites; and, indeed, the Prophet removes doubt by expressly naming *Ephraim*. He likewise adds *Samaria*, which was the metropolis of that *people*, or of the ten tribes; for fortified cities, conceiving themselves to be placed beyond the reach of danger, are much more insolent in their pretensions. They think that they will always have the remedy in their hands by capitulating with the enemy, though the whole country were laid waste. On this account Isaiah threatens that they will not be exempted from the general calamity. He says that all will feel that the predictions which were uttered by the mouth of God will not be without effect. By the word *know*, which relates to actual experience, he indirectly reproves their unbelief; as if he had said, "Since I speak to the deaf, and you set no value on the warnings which I now address to you, the actual event will teach you, but too late."

Who say. Here the Prophet attacks the obstinacy and rebellion of that people, because, though they had once and again been chastised by God's scourges, and that sharply, they were so far from repentance that they reckoned their losses to be gain, and became more hardened. Assuredly they who thus insolently mock at God are not brought to obedience without being reduced to utter weakness. Now, such an insult openly and avowedly provokes God's anger, and therefore the Prophet says that it proceeds from *the haughtiness and pride of the heart.* Hence it follows that it is right to apply to knotty timber chisels that are harder still.

10. *The bricks are fallen down.* These are the words of men who were obstinate, and who despised the calamity which they had sustained, as if it had been of advantage to them, because it afforded them an opportunity of adorning with greater splendour both their houses and their fields. "*We shall build,*" they say, "*more magnificently.* The brick houses have been thrown down that we may dwell in splendid palaces; and since the trees have been cut down, we shall plant more fruitful ones." This was not the fault of a single age, for at this day we see the same obstinacy in the world.

How many are the distresses with which Europe has been afflicted for thirty or forty years? How many are the chastisements by which she has been called to repentance? And yet it does not appear that those numerous chastisements have done any good. On the contrary, luxury increases every day, lawless passions are inflamed, and men go on in crimes and profligacy more shamelessly than ever. In short, those very calamities appear to have been so many excitements to luxury and splendour. What then should we expect but to be bruised with heavier blows?

11. *But the* LORD *will set up the adversaries of Rezin against him.* The Israelites having been proud of their alliance with the king of Syria, and hoping that everything would succeed to their wish, Isaiah threatens a new change which will take away all their hope and utterly frustrate their designs, for the Assyrians afterwards took arms and waged war with the Syrians. Accordingly, when *Rezin* had been slain, (2 Kings xvi. 9,) that country was entirely ruined. Still more does he heighten this, by adding, *he shall mingle*;[1] for he means that the Lord will gather together and *mingle* various enemies whom he will commission to destroy the king of Syria, as the soldiers who composed the army of that vast monarchy were collected out of various nations.

12. *Syria in front.*[2] The Prophet shows what will be the nature of this change, and what will happen after the death of *Rezin,* (2 Kings xvi. 9,) who had allied himself with Israel against Judah; namely, that *the Syrians,* after the death of their king, from being allies will suddenly become enemies, and will make war against Israel, which took place. (2 Kings xvii. 3.) This is what he means when he says that *Syria* will be *in front;* for I do not agree with those expositors who make *Syria* to mean "those on the East," and *the Philistines* "those on the West." A more natural meaning is,

[1] *And join his enemies together.* Margin, Heb. *mingle.*—Eng. Ver.—CALVIN, in his version placed at the beginning of this Chapter, renders the clause, *and will join his enemies together;* but when he comes to explain it, he translates the Hebrew word literally, *he will mingle.* In both renderings the exact coincidence with our ordinary version deserves notice.—*Ed.*

[2] *The Syrians before.*—Eng. Ver.

that the enemies will invade them on every side; because on all sides they who had been regarded as faithful friends will rise up to destroy them. The phrases *in front* and *behind* agree with the ordinary modes of speaking, so that we ought not to seek an interpretation that is new and foreign to the purpose.

From this example we ought to learn what it is to rely on human power and the alliances of kings, and especially when, in consequence of being entangled by unlawful covenants, we become careless and fall asleep; for as soon as the Lord pleases, they who were formerly on our side will, in the smallest portion of time, be turned against us to our ruin; and remedies, which we thought would be useful to us will prove to be our destruction, and will assist us both *before* and *behind*. We ought also to observe that God does not all at once expend all his scourges, but when we proceed obstinately, and provoke him more and more, he increases and multiplies the chastisements, and still inflicts a new kind of punishment, till at length he subdues our obstinacy and rebellion.

And will devour Israel with the whole mouth.[1] The phrase *with the whole mouth,*[2] is equivalent to an ordinary idiom of our own, (*à pleine bouche,*) *with full mouth.* As if he had said, "Israel will be exposed as a prey to her enemies, so that on every hand she will be devoured *with open mouth*, both by the Syrians and by the Philistines."

His anger is not turned away. This is the severest of all, and beyond everything else ought to have terrified the ungodly, that if they had suffered much, they have more to endure; that new punishments continually await them, because by going on in their obstinacy they inflame still more the wrath of God. Men take this as an incentive to more obstinate and determined wickedness, that, having suffered some punishment, they think that they have nothing more to suffer, and become more hardened. They do not even believe that they are any longer exposed to the judgment

[1] *With open mouth.* Margin, Heb., *with whole mouth.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] בכל פה, (*bĕchōl pēh.*) ὁλῷ τῷ στόματι, *toto ore, plenis faucibus;* a metaphor from beasts of prey eagerly devouring their food.—*Rosenmüller.*

of God, who has already spent his rods; and as if they were altogether out of his power, they give themselves greater indulgence, and shake off every yoke.

But his hand is stretched out still. What we have now stated is the reason why Isaiah threatens that *the hand of the Lord is still stretched out,* that they may not think that they have escaped that *hand.* Now, this is said not for the purpose of instructing, but of accusing, though the threatenings have also a tendency to make doctrine better understood; but as he had to do with obstinate men, on whom no chastisement produced any good effect, he therefore announces that the chastisements are not yet at an end; and that, although God has for a time discontinued those chastisements, still he has not dispensed with them, but has *his hand lifted up* to inflict a new wound.

13. *But the people hath not turned.*[1] The copulative ו (*vau*) is rendered by some interpreters *for,* as if the Prophet were assigning a reason why the Lord does not cease to employ his scourges in the continual infliction of chastisements; that is, because *the people* are so hardened and obstinate that they will not repent. When there is no repentance, it is unreasonable to expect that God will yield to obstinate men, as if he were vanquished; and the consequence is, that he prepares himself for inflicting severer punishment. Since, therefore, no chastisements had produced any amendment in Israel, he must perish; for when they had been so frequently struck and punished, and did not at all repent, this was a proof of the most desperate wickedness.

This is a very severe rebuke, that although the Lord not only admonishes us by words, but actually pushes us forward, and constrains us by various chastisements, still we grow hardened, and do not suffer ourselves to be drawn away from our crimes and our lusts. Desperate wickedness is thus evinced, and nothing more heinous could be spoken or conceived. It is a heinous offence, when men do not receive instruction as soon as it is delivered to them; it is more heinous, when they are not affected by rebukes; it is the most heinous of all, when, in spite even of chastisements, they

[1] *For the people turneth not.*—Eng. Ver.

grow hardened, and even kick, or by their headstrong behaviour inflame still more the indignation of the Judge, and do not consider why they were punished, or what it is to which the Lord calls them. Accordingly, when no remedies produce any good effect, what must we think but that the disease is incurable and utterly desperate?

This rebuke applies not to the Israelites only but to us also. Already hath the Lord chastised the whole world by various afflictions, so that hardly any part could be exempted from distresses and calamities. And yet all appear to have obstinately conspired against God, so that, whatever He does, they cease not to retain their former character, and to carry on their wicked courses. Justly, therefore, might the Lord address to us the same expostulation, and assuredly he addresses us by the mouth of Isaiah; and we ought not to look for another Prophet to threaten new chastisements, seeing that our case is not different from that of the Israelites, and we are involved in the same blame with them.

Nor have they sought the LORD *of hosts.* This is immediately added as an explanation, for the reason why God inflicts punishment is, to bring back the wanderers to himself. By this method, indeed, he appears to drive men to a greater distance from him; but as it belongs to him to bring out of the grave those whom he appeared to have wounded and slain, by terrifying sinners he only humbles them, in order that they may return to him. And indeed the beginning of conversion is *to seek God,* or rather it is the only rule of living well; if we turn aside from it we have no rest for the sole of our foot. But we must now inquire what it is to *seek God,* or in what manner we ought to *seek him;* for hypocrites will always be ready to plead, that by prayers and fastings, and tears, and a sorrowful countenance, they earnestly entreat God and implore forgiveness. But God chooses to be *sought* in another manner; that is, when the sinner truly subdued, willingly takes the yoke which he had shaken off, and yields obedience to him whom he had despised.

14. *Therefore the* LORD *will cut off from Israel.* He intimates that God's vengeance will be universal, and will in-

volve all ranks; for the whole nation was corrupted, and the contagion had spread over the whole country, to such an extent that no part was left whole or sound. Now, when iniquity thus abounds, every one flatters himself, and they think that they have concealed themselves by an admirable veil, because they have many who are like them; and when they compare themselves with others, they think that they have pleaded their excuse. This is the reason why he threatens that vengeance generally against all; for not one was free from the general disease.

Head and tail, branch and reed.[1] By *branch* he means the stronger and more powerful; by *reed* or *rush* he means the feebler, that is, men of the lowest rank, and who had scarcely any wealth. He therefore means that the vengeance of God hangs over them, and spares neither the strong nor the weak, neither the highest nor the lowest, because no part is sound or uninfected by the general disease.

15. *The ancient and honourable, he is the head.* What he had spoken allegorically about *the head* and *the tail* he explains more plainly and without a figure. He says that the *heads* are the princes and nobles who had the charge of public affairs, and sat at the helm of the commonwealth. To these he adds the *false prophets*, and says that they are meant by *the tail*. But he explains only the first part of the verse, and says nothing about the *branch and reed*. The reason why he omitted them is easily explained. It is, because he intended to press hardest on those who were more heinous transgressors, and who led others to commit sin, in consequence of the influence which they obtained from their high rank. He gives to the prophets the name of *the tail*, not because they were mean and contemptible, as some think; but he intended to denote the lowest parts of the whole body. By *the head* he means magistrates and judges, and by *the tail* he means *false prophets*, because they deceive and impose upon men by falsehoods and hypocrisy, as if he had compared the one to lions or bears, and the other to foxes.

This passage warns us that we ought not to slumber in

[1] *Branch and rush.*—Eng. Ver.

our sins, because wickedness and profligacy abound in all ranks, and no class of men is sound or uninfected; for the more that vices abound, so much the more will the wrath of God be kindled against the highest and the lowest. We ought, especially in the present day, amidst that pestilence of every kind of evils, to fear lest, when the wrath of God hath begun to burn, it may consume everything, high and low.

16. *For the rulers of this people are seducers.*[1] Some render it, *they who make thee blessed,* or, *they who call thee blessed;* as if he had said that nothing was more hurtful or destructive to a nation than flatteries, which gave encouragement to unbounded licentiousness. But I shall follow the reading which I approved on a former occasion, when the same word occurred.[2] (Isa. iii. 12.) He means that the rulers and magistrates, whose duty it was to restrain the people within the limits of decent behaviour, allowed all to indulge freely in crimes and wickedness. On this account they ought justly to be reckoned *seducers* and corrupters, for corruption flows from them to the whole body of the people, as from the head to the members. Magistrates and pastors are appointed in order to restrain the waywardness of the people, to enjoin what is good and right, and especially to defend the honour of God. If they neglect these duties they ought to be reckoned impostors and not *rulers,* for they give rise to miserable confusion. Now, when every one does what he pleases, and the reins of government are nowhere to be found, can there be anything but the most terrible result? When the common people are thus punished on account of their faults, no lighter vengeance awaits the *rulers,* because they have neglected the duty entrusted to them, and have occasioned so many evils.

And they who are governed are destroyed. By this clause he means that wicked princes, and those who rule according to their own caprice, are destructive; and in like manner teachers who rather deceive and impose on men than point out the way of salvation, because through their fault the

[1] *For the leaders of this people* (margin, *they that call them blessed*) *cause them to err.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] See the author's explanation of this phrase at page 140.—*Ed.*

people are ruined. But at the same time he shows that this affords no excuse to any one for seeking to make bad rulers a cloak for their own transgressions, as is commonly done, for *if the blind lead the blind,* as Christ says, *both will fall into the ditch.* It is certain that none are ruined by wicked and treacherous *leaders,* but those who of their own accord wish to be led astray.

17. *Therefore the* LORD *will not delight in their young men.* Isaiah describes more clearly how dreadful will be that vengeance of God against all ranks; for so far will more flagrant transgressors be from escaping, that neither boys nor youths, nor widows, will be exempted, who are usually spared even amidst dreadful slaughter; which was usually done even among heathens at the sacking of towns, as we learn from history. But here the Lord threatens that he will pay no regard either to sex or to age. Yet the following view will not be unsuitable. "Although the carnage will rob many women of their husbands, and will deprive many children of their parents, still God will not shrink from punishing women by making them widows, and children by making them orphans." But as it does not greatly affect the general meaning, I do not dwell upon it. Again, that they may not accuse God of cruelty, he at the same time shows that there are good reasons why he is so severe, because they are all wicked, and therefore that they deserve to be cast headlong to ruin without any distinction.

For all are hypocrites and evil-doers. As to this word, I was unwilling to depart from the opinion commonly entertained, though חָנֵף (*chānēph*) means an ungodly, deceitful, or treacherous and wicked man. He appears to point out the source of all the evils, that there was no true fear of God among them. By this he does not mean any slight dissimulation, but inward contempt seated in the heart, by which consciences are stupified, so that no instructions produce any effect on them; as if he had said that they were deeply sunk in their depravity. But as wickedness, when it has taken possession of the mind, drags the hands and feet, and the rest of the members of the body along with it, so the Prophet adds, that they are all *evil-doers.*

And every mouth speaketh villany.[1] Thirdly, he adds that they have proceeded to such a pitch of open wickedness, that they boast of their crimes without shame. The Hebrew word נבלה (*niblāh*), which is translated *folly*, has frequently a more extensive meaning; for it denotes baseness, villany, and madness. (Gen. xxxiv. 7; Josh. vii. 15; Judges xix. 24.) Here, in my opinion, the Prophet means that they are so entirely abandoned to wicked courses, that we need not seek any other proof of it than from their tongues.

His anger will not be turned away. He again repeats this statement, which ought to be frequently repeated; for it is not enough to have been once informed how dreadful are the judgments of the Lord against the wicked; so easily and quickly will there steal upon us that forgetfulness of them which banishes uneasiness, as well as fear, about the future. Besides, we are led astray and blinded by that deception, for we think that the infliction of a single punishment has exhausted the power of God. There can be nothing better, therefore, than to hold by this principle, that whenever God chastises us he threatens something more dreadful, if we do not quickly repent. (Lev. xxvi. 18, 21, 24, 28.)

But his hand is stretched out still. Since the Prophet repeats this warning, let us unceasingly call to our remembrance, that the indignation of God is not yet appeased, though we may think that he has already punished us severely for our sins. What then ought we to conclude, when he has given us but a light chastisement? At the present day, for instance, we have endured some punishment; but what is it as compared with those dreadfully severe calamities which that nation had suffered, when Isaiah foretold that new chastisements were still awaiting them? What then will become of us? The Lord will undoubtedly continue to perform what belongs to him, and will always be like himself. If this dread do not arouse us, our insensibility is evidently beyond endurance. I have translated the verb שׁב (*shab*) in the future sense, *will not be turned away*, to make the meaning more clear; for though he speaks as if

[1] *And every mouth speaketh folly* (margin, *or, villany*).—Eng. Ver.

it had been a past transaction, still he threatens a continuance of punishments against the rebellious.

18. *For wickedness burneth as the fire.* The Prophet attacks the wicked, who are accustomed to defend themselves by laying the blame on God. Either they practise evasions, in order to convince themselves that they are innocent, or, when they have been convicted, they still extenuate their guilt, as if the severity of God were beyond proper bounds. Never, certainly, do they acknowledge that God is just in punishing them, till they are compelled to acknowledge it; and even though they do not venture to excuse themselves publicly, still they fret and murmur. With the view of repressing such insolence, the Prophet compares the calamities to *burning*, but shows that the wickedness of men is the wood and fuel, by which the anger of God is kindled: as if he had said, "All exclaim and make loud complaints that the wrath of God *burns* violently, and yet they do not consider that their own sins are the fans by which it is inflamed, and that those sins supply the fuel, and that even themselves are consumed by the inward fire of their crimes."

It shall devour the briers and thorns. The meaning is, that this flame will seize every part of Judea. Two things are here expressed, that the punishment of sin proceeds from the judgment of God, and yet that the blame lies with the sinners themselves, that they may not remonstrate with God as if he had dealt cruelly with them. There is a beautiful gradation; for we perceive that it usually happens that a fire, kindled in the lowest part of any place, gathers strength by degrees, spreads wider and wider, and ascends to the higher parts. Such will the wrath of God be; for Isaiah shows that it does not all at once seize the wicked, but is gradually kindled, till it utterly destroy them. At first the Lord proceeds gently, but if a light chastisement produce no good effect, he increases and doubles the punishment. If he see that we are obstinate, his wrath burns to the uttermost, so as to destroy us altogether, and consume us like a thick forest. Lastly, as the Prophets elsewhere declare, we must be like chaff and straw as soon as the wrath of God is kindled. (Psalm lxxxiii. 14; Is. v. 24; xxxiii. 11; xl. 24; xli. 2; xlvii. 14.)

19. *Through the anger of the* LORD *of hosts is the land darkened.* After having shown that the cause of all our evils proceeds from ourselves, and that therefore the blame of it should be laid upon us, he at the same time shows that God is a most righteous avenger. When men draw down upon themselves calamities and distresses, God does not suffer them to escape his hand; not that he is inclined to cruelty, for he is *gracious and merciful,* (Exod. xxxiv. 6,) but because he is just, and cannot endure the wicked. The dreadful nature of God's vengeance is described by the metaphor of *darkness,* than which nothing can be more dismal; for without figures of speech a judgment so revolting cannot be expressed. And yet he appears to allude to *smoke,* of which he spoke in the former verse; for when a conflagration extends, and rages with such violence, the light must be overpowered by the thick *smoke.*

No man shall spare his brother. In this last clause and in the following verse, the Prophet describes the methods and means, as they are called, by which the Lord will execute his vengeance, when his wrath has been thus kindled. When no enemies shall be seen whom we have cause to dread, he will arm ourselves for our destruction. As if he had said, "The Lord will find no difficulty in executing the vengeance which he threatens; for though there be none to give us any annoyance from without, he will ruin us by intestine broils and civil wars." It is shocking and monstrous to relate, *No man shall spare his brother,* "every man shall devour his own flesh;" for *no man ever hated his own flesh.* (Eph. v. 29.) But when the Lord hath blinded us, what remains but that we mutually destroy each other? And though it is monstrous, yet it happens almost every day.

We are not restrained by any relationship either of blood, or of religion, or of the image of God, which we all bear; though even the heathen, on the contrary, were prevented, by sharing in this common nature, from injuring each other, because they perceived that the beasts themselves are restrained by similarity of nature from cruelty against their own kind; for a wolf does not devour a wolf, and a bear does not devour a bear. That *human* beings, from whom the

name of *humanity* is derived, should fight with such cruelty and fierceness against one another as to exceed the rage of wild beasts, is monstrous; and this evil can arise from no other source than that God hath blinded them, and *given them up to a reprobate sense.* (Rom. i. 28.) Justly hath Isaiah described this kind of revenge; for when men enjoy peace, they think that they are placed beyond the reach of danger, and dread nothing. But the Lord laughs at this indifference, and shows that he will execute his vengeance by their own hand, which he will arm and direct against them.

20. *Every one shall snatch on the right hand.* It is equivalent to a phrase in common use, *prendre et ravir à toutes mains, to take and seize at all hands.* This mode of expression denotes either insatiable covetousness or insatiable cruelty; for the eagerness to *snatch* excites to savage cruelty. That they will be insatiable he expresses more emphatically, by saying that, in consequence of being impelled by blind fierceness and inconceivable rage, they will suck their brother's blood as freely as they would devour the flesh which was their own property. The bitterness of the vengeance is greatly heightened by this circumstance, that the children of Abraham, and the holy posterity of the chosen race, break out into such beastly fury. Let us therefore remember that it is a dreadful proof of heavenly punishment, when brothers are hurried on, with irreconcilable eagerness, to inflict mutual wounds.

21. *Manasseh, Ephraim.* These tribes were closely related to each other; for besides their being descended from the same ancestor, Abraham, a close relationship arose out of their being descended from one patriarch, his grandson, Joseph. (Gen. xli. 50-52.) But though they were closely allied, still God threatens that he will cause them to destroy themselves by mutual conflict, as if they were devouring the flesh of their own arm, and, consequently, that there will be no need of foreign enemies. He likewise adds that, after having wearied themselves out by mutual wounds, both will unite against Judah, in order to destroy it.

And for all this his anger shall not be turned away. If any one take into consideration those calamities which Isaiah

threatened, he will be amazed and greatly astonished that still more severe chastisements are foretold. But in this manner God acts towards the wicked, and does not cease to afflict till he utterly overwhelm and destroy them, when, after having been frequently invited, they refuse to be reconciled to him. We need not wonder, therefore, that he inflicts stroke after stroke, as he also foretold by Moses that he would *punish seven times more* (Lev. xxvi. 18), and *bring seven times more plagues upon* (Lev. xxvi. 21) those who would not repent; lest they should think that, when they had been punished once or twice, they would not be punished again.

But his hand is stretched out still. By this he means that rods are prepared, that he may immediately strike with them; for it is not with a woman's passion that the Lord is angry, but his wrath is immediately followed by revenge.

CHAPTER X.

1. Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed;

2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless!

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation *which* shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the

1. Væ decernentibus decreta iniqua, et qui dictantes dictant injuriam,

2. Ut arceant pauperes a judicio, et eripiant jus pauperibus populi mei, viduas spolient, et pupillos prædentur.

3. Et quid facietis in die visitationis? Et cùm desolatio venerit è longinquo, ad quem confugietis auxilii causa, et ubi deponetis (*vel, munietis*) gloriam vestram?

4. Nisi (*vel, sine me*) corruent inter vinctos, et inter occisos cadent. In hoc toto non erit aversus furor ejus, et adhuc manus ejus extenta.

5. O Assur virga furoris mei, et baculus ipse in manu eorum ira mea.

6. Ad gentem simulatricem mittam eum, et contra populum indignationis meæ præcipiam ei, ut prædetur prædam; ut rapiat spolia

prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

8. For he saith, *Are* not my princes altogether kings?

9. *Is* not Calno as Carchemish? *is* not Hamath as Arpad? *is* not Samaria as Damascus?

10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;

11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that*, when the LORD hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

13. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*.

14. And my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs *that are* left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? *or* shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake *itself* against them that lift it up, *or* as if the staff should lift up *itself, as if it were* no wood.

16. Therefore shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

17. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;

et ponat eum in conculcationem, quasi lutum platearum.

7. Atqui ipse non sic arbitrabitur, nec cor ejus sic cogitabit; quia in corde ejus erit ad extirpandum et succidendum gentes non paucas.

8. Dicet enim, Annon Principes mei pariter Reges?

9. Annon, ut Carchemis, sic Calno? annon Hamath, sicut Arphad? annon Samaria ut Damascus?

10. Sicut invenit manus mea regnum idolorum, cùm simulachra eorum sint præ Ierusalem et Samaria.

11. Annon sicut feci Samariæ et idolis ejus, ita faciam Ierusalem et idolis ejus?

12. Sed accidet, Cùm perfecerit Dominus totum opus suum in monte Sion et Ierusalem, visitabo super fructum magnificentiæ cordis regis Assur, et super gloriam altitudinis oculorum ejus.

13. Quia dixit: In fortitudine manus meæ feci, et in sapientia mea; quia perspicax fui; et ideo abstuli terminos populorum, et recondita eorum diripui, et detraxi tanquam fortis sedentes.

14. Et invenit quasi nidum manus mea opes populorum; et ut colliguntur ova derelicta, sic ego universam terram collegi; nec fuit qui abigeret ala, et aperiret os, et sibilaret.

15. An gloriabitur securis adversus secantem ipsa? An magnificabitur serra adversus eum qui ipsum agitat? quasi elevatio virgæ contra elevantem ipsam, quasi elevationes baculi, non ligni.

16. Propterea mittet Dominator Dominus exercituum in pingues ejus maciem, et subtus gloriam ejus succendet incendium, quasi incendium ignis.

17. Et erit lux Israel in ignem, et Sanctus ejus in flammam; comburetque et devorabit vepres ejus et spinas die uno.

18. And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

19. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21. The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

24. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

25. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger, in their destruction.

26. And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and *as* his rod *was* upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

27. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

28. He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

29. They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

18. Gloriam sylvæ ejus, et frugiferi campi ejus, ab anima usque ad carnem consumet; et erit quasi dissolutio signiferi.

19. Et reliquiæ ligni sylvæ ejus ad numerum erunt, ut puer eas numeret.

20. Erit in die illo. Non adjicient amplius reliquiæ Israel, et superstites è domo Iacob inniti percussori suo; nam innitentur super Iehovam sanctum Israel, in veritate.

21. Reliquiæ revertentur, reliquiæ Iacob ad Deum fortem.

22. Nam si fuerit populus tuus Israel instar arenæ maris, reliquiæ ejus revertentur. Consumptio decreta inundans justitiam, (*vel, justitia.*)

23. Quia consumptionem et finitionem Dominus Iehova exercituum facit in medio totius terræ.

24. Propterea sic dicit Iehova exercituum: Ne timeas, populе mi, incolæ Sion, ab Assur. In virga percutiet te, et baculum suum levabit contra te in via Ægypti.

25. Sed adhuc paululum, et consumabitur (*vel, consumetur*) furor et indignatio mea, in abolitione eorum.

26. Et excitabit Iehova exercituum contra eum flagellum, secundum cædem Madian in rupe Oreb; et virga ejus super mare, levabitque eam in via Ægypti.

27. Et accidet in die illa, ut auferatur onus ejus ab humero tuo, et jugum ejus à cervice tua; et dissipabitur jugum à facie unctionis.

28. Venit in Aiath, transiit in Migron, in Michmas reponet vasa tua.

29. Transierunt vadum, in Gæba pernoctaverunt hospitio; territa est Rama; Gibæa Saulis fugit.

30. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.

31. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

32. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand *against* the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

33. Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature *shall be* hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

30. Hinni voce tua filia Gallim, fac audire Laisam paupercula Anathoth.

31. Mota est Madmena; incolæ Gebim collegerunt se.

32. Adhuc dies: cùm in Nob interquiescet, agitabit manum suam versus montem filiæ Sion, collem Ierusalem.

33. Ecce, Dominus Iehova exercituum amputabit ramum cum terrore, (*vel, potenter,*) et proceræ staturæ excidentur, et sublimia humiliabuntur.

34. Et resecabit condensa sylvæ ferro, et Libanus violenter cadet.

1. *Woe to them that decree.* He now attacks the people more closely, as he did in the first and second chapters, to make them feel that they are justly afflicted; for men never acknowledge that they are justly punished till they have been manifestly convicted and constrained. Though they were sufficiently convicted by former proofs, still he found it necessary to come to particulars, that by means of them their hypocrisy might be exposed; for men are so brazen-faced as to think that any excuse shields them, and openly to accuse God. When they had become so shameless, it was impossible for him to rebuke them too sharply, or to carry his accusations beyond proper limits, so as to shut their mouths, whether they would or not.

עמל (*gnāmāl*) and און (*āvĕn*) are often joined together in Scripture, as in Ps. vii. 14. און signifies *vanity* and *iniquity*, but the latter meaning agrees better with this passage. עמל, (*gnāmāl,*) on the other hand, denotes vexation, and often the very cause of the vexation, that is, the oppression inflicted by the stronger on the weaker, when they abuse their authority and power. Having formerly shown that the wickedness originated from the governors themselves, (Is. i. 10, 23,) he places them in the first rank, that they may undergo the punishment of the crimes which they had occasioned. This ought to be carefully observed, for they who are elevated to the highest rank imagine that they are ex-

empted from the ordinary lot of other men, and that they are not bound to give account to God; and therefore he threatens that they will have this privilege, that they will be the first that are punished.

Some think that two classes are here described, and draw a distinction between חקקים, (*chōkĕkīm,*) *those who decree* and מכתבים, (*mechattĕbīm,*) *those who write.*[1] But I do not approve of this, for he attacks generally, and without distinction, princes and magistrates, who oppressed the people by unjust and tyrannical decrees, in such a manner that they approached to absolute robbery; and therefore he includes every class of magistrates and governors.

2. *To keep back.*[2] Others render it, *to cause them to turn aside;* but the true meaning is, *to keep back the poor from judgment,* or make them lose their cause. This is the iniquity and oppression which he had mentioned in the former verse, that *the poor are deprived of their rights,* and are robbed for the sake of the rich, and go away mocked from the judgment-seat, while everything is laid open to plunder. He chiefly mentions *the poor,* because for the most part they are destitute of help and assistance. While magistrates and judges ought to have assisted them more than others, they allow themselves greater liberty, and indulge more contemptuously in oppressing them. Those who have wealth or friends, or favour, are less liable to be oppressed; for they have arms in their hands to defend, and even to revenge themselves. But the Lord says that he takes peculiar care of the poor, (Exod. xxii. 23; Deut. xv. 9, and xxiv. 15,) though they are commonly despised; and that he takes such care of them that he does not allow oppression inflicted on them to pass unpunished; for it is not without good ground that he calls himself the protector and defender of such persons. (Ps. lxviii. 5.) From this consideration, therefore, the poor and weak ought to derive consolation, and more calmly to endure distresses and afflictions, because they learn that God takes care of them, and will not permit any

[1] *The prescribers.*—*Stock.* "Not the *scribes,* who write vexatious decrees, but the *judges,* who cause them to be written."—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] *To turn aside.*—Eng. Ver.

injustice done to them to pass unpunished. The powerful and wealthy are at the same time warned not to take it as an incentive to sin that they have not been punished; for though no avenger be now seen, still the Lord will avenge, and will undertake the cause of those whom they imagined to be destitute of all assistance.

3. *And what will you do?* Here the Prophet severely threatens princes, who were careless and indolent amidst their distresses, as men intoxicated by prosperity are wont to despise haughtily every danger. He therefore warns them that, though God delay, still he has fixed a time for judgment, and already it is close at hand. In consequence of having vanquished the neighbouring nations in war, and fortified themselves by an alliance with a very powerful nation, they had no longer any fear; and therefore he expressly declares that their calamity will *come from afar.*

In the day of visitation. By *visitation* is here meant *judgment,* for God *visits* us in two ways, that is, in mercy and in judgment. In both ways he reveals himself and his power to us, both when, in compassion on us, he rescues us from dangers, and when he punishes those who are ungodly and who despise the word. Both kinds of *visitation* have the same object in view, for we do not see the Lord but in his works; and we think that he is absent unless he give us a token of his presence. This *visitation,* therefore, the Scripture accommodates to our capacity; for when we are pressed down by afflictions, and when the ungodly freely give themselves up to wickedness, we suppose that God is at a great distance, and takes no interest in our affairs.

Accordingly, *visitation* must here be understood to mean the *judgment* by which God, in opposition to the waywardness and insolence of the ungodly, will bring them back like deserters. But if the judgments of God be so dreadful in this life, how dreadful will he be when he shall come at last to judge the world! All the instances of punishment that now produce fear or terror, are nothing more than preparations for that final vengeance with which he will thunder against the reprobate, and many things which he appears to pass by, he purposely reserves and delays till that last day.

And if the ungodly are not able to bear these chastisements, how much less will they be capable of enduring his glorious and inconceivable majesty, when he shall ascend that awful tribunal, before which the angels themselves tremble!

And when the desolation shall come from afar. When he says *from afar*, it is proper to observe that we must not allow the prosperity which we now enjoy to bereave us of our senses; for they who carelessly sleep amidst their vices, and by this wicked indifference call in question the power of God, will quickly feel that in a moment, whenever he pleases, he can shake heaven and earth from east to west.

To whom will you flee? He declares that it is in vain for them to rely on their resources, for, in opposition to the hand of God, they will be fruitless and of no avail whatever. At the same time he likewise shows that this will be a most righteous reward; for when they are cruel towards others, they will justly be made to feel that they have now no help either from God or from men. *They will have judgment without mercy who have showed no mercy.* (James ii. 13.) This applies especially to the judges, who ought to have been a protection to the whole people; for they have been appointed for the purpose of defending the poor and wretched. But if they shall neglect and betray, and even plunder them, it is right that they should be made to feel, by their own destitute condition, how greatly this cruelty offends God.

Where will you deposit your glory? This is understood by commentators to mean that they will be thrown down from their high rank. They suppose it to be an ironical and contemptuous question put by the Prophet, "What will become of that illustrious rank of which the nobles cruelly and foolishly vaunt, whenever God spares them for a little?" But as this was a forced rendering, I rather think that Isaiah asks, "Where will they find a safe hiding-place in which they may *deposit their glory?*" Thus I consider the meaning to be, *to leave*,[1] for the sake of being preserved; and the two clauses correspond to each other, *To whom will you flee?* and, "Where will you find a refuge for your glory in order

[1] *Where will ye leave your glory?*—Eng. Ver. *And where will ye deposit your things of value?*—Stock.

to preserve it?" But perhaps a preference will be given to a different view, which I have noted in the margin;[1] for the verb עזב (*gnāzăb*) signifies also to *strengthen*. Again, if God thus devotes to destruction princes who are thrown down from an elevated position, what will become of the lowest? No one, therefore, has any reason to flatter himself; for we shall all be *like stubble* when the wrath of the Lord has been kindled against us. (Psalm lxxxiii. 13.)

4. *If they shall not fall down.* As the meaning of the particle בלתי (*biltī*) is ambiguous, various interpretations of it have been given by commentators. Some take it in an exclusive sense, as in many other passages of Scripture; as if he had said, *Only he shall fall down among the bound and slain;* that is, because all will be condemned and given up either to captivity or to death. Others render it, *Without me they shall fall.* If this rendering be preferred, the Prophet shows that the cause of their destruction is, that they have revolted from God; and unquestionably the cause of all our distresses is, to forsake the fountain of life and of salvation, and of all blessings. In this manner he sharply reproves the madness of the ungodly, who vaunt of having been forsaken by God, as if nothing were more desirable or pleasant than to withdraw to the greatest distance from him; and thus it will be an ironical reproof, that their calamity will arise from no other source than from the absence of God, in whom, without any good ground, they had rejoiced.

Others consider it to be an elliptical expression, that they will have no hiding-place but by throwing themselves down under the captives and the slain. It might also be a form of an oath, *If they shall not;*[2] and the meaning would be highly appropriate, that God swears in wrath that he will spare none of them, but will abandon some to captivity, and will deliver up others to be put to death. In a word, this declaration shows what are the consequences that await all those who, after having been warned by the word of God, do not

[1] This clause is rendered in CALVIN'S version, *Where will you deposit your glory?* and, in the margin, *Where will you secure your glory?—Ed.*

[2] For this form of an oath, see page 173, n. 1.—*Ed.*

repent. From what immediately follows, we learn that a dreadful and alarming destruction is threatened; for he repeats what he had already said frequently, that *the wrath of the Lord is not yet apparent,* that he will find out more frightful punishments for avenging himself. This teaches us that nothing is more truly desirable than to be moved by a sincere feeling of repentance, and to acknowledge our fault, that we may obtain pardon from the Lord.

5. *O Assyrian.* What now follows relates to the threatening of punishment, but at the same time mingles some consolation for alleviating the distresses of the godly. Indeed, the greater part of the discourse is occupied with this doctrine, that all the afflictions which shall be brought upon them by the *Assyrians* are a temporary scourge inflicted by God, but that unbelievers, after having too freely indulged themselves, will at length be brought to submission. הוי (*hōy*) is sometimes an interjection expressive of lamentation, *Ah!* Sometimes it denotes addressing, *O!* Sometimes it means, as the old translator rendered it, *Wo to.* But here it cannot be explained in any other way than that God calls the *Assyrians,* or assumes the character of one who sighs, because he is compelled to inflict punishment on his people by means of the *Assyrians.*

But when I more closely examine the whole matter, I rather come to this opinion, that here the Lord calls on the *Assyrians,* as if he armed them by his authority to carry on war. He had formerly said that they would come; but hypocrites are so careless that they are never moved by the fear of God, till his scourges are not only seen but felt. This is the reason why he now addresses them, *Come;* as if a judge called an officer and ordered him to put a malefactor in chains, or delivered him to the hangman to inflict capital punishment upon him. Thus the Lord calls the Assyrians to execute his vengeance by their hands.

And the staff in their hand is mine indignation. This may be viewed as referring to the *Assyrian,* and may be explained so as to be a repetition of the same statement, with a slight change of the words. But I distinguish between them in this manner, that the *Assyrians* are called *the rod of God's*

indignation; and next, that the swords and weapons with which they are furnished are nothing else than *God's anger;* as if the Prophet had said, that God, according to his pleasure, made use of the Assyrians in the same manner as swords for the execution of *his anger;* and further, that although they bear swords, still there will be no reason to be afraid of them, except so far as the wrath of God shall be displayed against the Jews.

The general meaning is, "All the strength which the enemy shall possess proceeds from the wrath of God, and they are moved by his secret impulse to destroy the people, for otherwise he would not move a finger." God declares that *the staff* which is carried *in their hand* is his *anger,* in order to inform the Jews that the blind attacks of the enemies are regulated by a heavenly providence. The phrase בידם (*bĕyādām*)[1] is rendered by some, *in place of them,* or, *into their country;* but I do not approve of this, and it is too far-fetched. In a word, the Lord calls the Assyrians, as the ministers of his wrath, to punish the sins of his people by their hand, and declares that everything that is in their hand is *his wrath.*

This doctrine has two objects in view; first, to terrify the ungodly, and to inform them that not in vain does the Lord threaten their destruction; next, he points out the reason why he punishes them. This was of the greatest importance for shaking off the sluggishness of the ungodly, who laughed to scorn all the discourses and threatenings of the Prophet. Secondly, this doctrine was of great importance when the people themselves began to be afflicted by the Assyrians; for then they actually saw that what the Prophets had foretold was not without foundation, and that these things did not happen by chance.

It will be objected, Why does he afterwards call *the staff* his *anger,* since he formerly said that the Assyrian is *the rod of his indignation;* for he ought rather to have spoken thus: "The Assyrian is my wrath, and the staff which he carries is the staff of my indignation." But we need not solicitously detain ourselves with the words, when we under-

[1] *In their hand.*—Eng. Ver.

stand the Prophet's meaning. He calls men *the staff of his anger*, because he uses them like a *staff*. He calls men's weapons *the wrath of God*, because they are not regulated by their own choice, but are proofs of the wrath of God. The Prophet therefore spoke appropriately, that we might not think that the wicked rush forward, without control, wherever their lawless passions lead them; but, on the contrary, that a bridle restrains and keeps them back from doing anything without the will of God.

Hence we ought to learn that the Lord acts even by the hand of the wicked. But here we must think and speak soberly; for it is proper to make a wise and judicious distinction between the work of God and the work of men. There are three ways in which God acts by men. First, *all of us move and exist by him.* (Acts xvii. 28.) Hence it follows that all actions proceed from his power. Secondly, in a peculiar manner he impells and directs the wicked according as he thinks fit; and although nothing is farther from their thoughts, still he makes use of their agency that they may kill and destroy one another, or that by their hand he may chastise his people. Of this method the Prophet speaks in this passage. Thirdly, when he guides by his Spirit of sanctification, which is peculiar to the elect. Whether, therefore, we are attacked by tyrants or robbers, or any other person, or foreign nations rise up against us, let us always plainly see the hand of God amidst the greatest agitation and confusion, and let us not suppose that anything happens by chance.

6. *To a hypocritical nation.* He proceeds with the former statement, by which he called *the Assyrian the rod of God's indignation;* for as the father does not in vain take up the *rod*, but has this object in view, to chastise his son, so he declares that the Lord's *rod* has no uncertain destination, but is appointed for the chastisement of the unthankful and wicked. He calls it a *hypocritical* or wicked nation, because it has no uprightness or sincerity. Uprightness is contrasted with hypocritical conduct, because uprightness is the chief of all the virtues; and in like manner hypocrisy is the mother of all the vices. It is therefore no light accusation which he

brings against the Israelites ; but he charges them with what is most of all to be abhorred, and therefore immediately afterwards he calls them *the people of his indignation,* as he elsewhere calls the Edomites *the people of his curse.* (Isa. xxxiv. 5.) Though he means that he is displeased with the Jews, yet the Hebrew phraseology is much more emphatic ; for it conveys the idea that the reason why this nation is devoted to destruction is, that nothing is to be found in it but grounds of anger. Indeed, God is never angry with us unless we have provoked him by our sins ; but when wickedness has come to its greatest height, his indignation is kindled, and cannot be appeased. Thus he cuts off the hope of reconciliation from hypocrites and wicked men, who ceased not continually to add sin to sin.

I will command him to take the spoil and to take the prey. He says that he has given a loose rein to the fierceness of enemies, that they may indulge without control in every kind of violence and injustice. Now, this must not be understood as if the Assyrians had a *command* from God by which they could excuse themselves. There are two ways in which God *commands ;* by his secret decree, of which men are not conscious ; and by his law, in which he demands from us voluntary obedience. This must be carefully observed, that we may reply to fanatics, who argue in an irreligious manner about the decree of God, when they wish to excuse their own wickedness and that of others. It is of importance, I say, to make a judicious distinction between these two ways of *commanding.* When the Lord reveals his will in the law, I must not ascend to his secret decree, which he intended should not be known to me, but must yield implicit obedience.

Now, if any one allege that he obeys God, when he complies with his sinful passions, he is guilty of falsehood, by vainly attempting to involve God in the guilt of his crimes, to which he knows that he is led by the failings of his own heart ; for on this point no other witness or judge is needed but a man's own conscience. God does indeed make use of the agency of a wicked man, but the man has no such intention. It is therefore accidental, so far as relates to men, that he acts by the wicked and reprobate ; for they neither

know that they serve God, nor wish to do so. Accordingly if they seize on this pretext, it is easy to prove that, when they yield obedience to their own sinful passion, they are at the greatest possible distance from obeying God. They have the will of God declared in his law, so that it is in vain for them to seek it anywhere else. So far as they are concerned, they do not perform the work of God, but the work of the devil; for they serve their own lusts. (Eph. ii. 2.) Nothing certainly was farther from the intention of the Assyrians than to give their services to God, but they were hurried along by their lust and ambition and covetousness. Yet the Lord directed their exertions and plans to an object which was totally different, and which was unknown to themselves.

This passage may be thus summed up. "It will be an uncommon and extraordinary instance of God's vengeance, when the Assyrians shall attack them with unrestrained liberty of action; for they will be sent by God, not to treat them with gentleness and moderation, but to plunder them in the manner of an invading army." He likewise adds, *to tread them down.* Nothing can go beyond this, for it means that the vanquished are not spared, but that every possible species of abuse has been heaped upon them.

7. *Yet he will not think so.*[1] When wicked men vomit out their rage, they disturb weak minds, as if it were not in the power of God to restrain their pride and fury. The Prophet therefore steps forth beforehand to meet them, and exhorts believers, whatever may be the excess to which wicked men indulge their insolence, still to feel that they are justly chastised by a secret judgment of God. He shows, as we lately noticed, that nothing will be farther from the intention of the Assyrians than to give their services to God, and to be the ministers of his wrath; but we must also consider what is their own motive of action.

Many would be ready to object, "Why dost thou, being God's herald, threaten us with the Assyrian; as if that savage beast would submit to execute the commandments of God?" He therefore replies, that God works with such amazing skill that he brings men to yield obedience to him,

[1] *Howbeit he meaneth not so.*—Eng. Ver.

even without their knowledge or will. "Although," says he, "their attempts and plans are totally different, yet this will not prevent God from performing and carrying into execution, by means of them, whatever he has decreed."

Many might likewise object, that it was a strange subversion of order, that God should place the elect people in subjection to the heathen nations; and that it was not just, however much the Jews had sinned, that their condition should be worse than that of those robbers who, on account of their wickedness and crimes, deserved the severest punishment. The Prophet therefore threatens that the Assyrians also will have their turn, and in due time will receive just punishment; and yet that it is not unreasonable that they should distress, plunder, devour, and slay other nations, because their own reward is reserved for them. Besides, the Prophet soothes the grief of the godly, and alleviates their solicitude and uneasiness, by declaring that God restrains the presumption of wicked men from carrying into effect whatever they think fit. He therefore shows that, however madly wicked men may rage, God mitigates his own judgments from heaven, so as to provide for the salvation of his Church. And thus, though the Assyrian, like a wild beast, may be eager to seize his prey, he bids them lift up their eyes to God, whose decree is far removed beyond the reach of that blind fury.

8. *For he will say.* He explains the reason why the Assyrian will not think that he is the *rod* of God. It is because, being blinded by pride, he acknowledges no authority superior to his own; for it is impossible for those who rely on their own superiority, and claim ability to do this or that, to submit to the providence of God. The authority which we ought justly to ascribe to God is, to believe that we cannot move even the smallest finger without his permission. On the other hand, whoever imagines that he can do anything, however small, assumes to himself, with blasphemous pride, the power of God.

Are not my princes altogether kings? The Prophet here gives a lively picture of the presumption of a heathen king in boasting that he had everything in his power. This is

especially the case with eminent *Princes* who, abounding in wealth, resources, and power, are blinded in such a manner as hardly to know that they are men. The opportunities of learning this are too abundant; for what *Prince* is there at the present day, who knows or remembers that he is a man, and liable to the ordinary calamities of life? Their minds are so entirely intoxicated and deranged, that they believe that whatever they have undertaken they will at once accomplish, and will surmount every obstacle.

9. *Is not Calno as Carchemish?* Here he mentions by name certain cities, though others think that they were countries; but it is more probable that they were cities, or some fortified places. "Shall it not happen," says he, "to those places which I have not yet subdued as it has happened to others that opposed me?" He therefore compares *Calno, Arpad,* and *Samaria,* which he afterwards subdued, to *Carchemish, Hamath,* and *Damascus,* which he had formerly subdued, and says that those will not be stronger than these. Thus wicked men are wont to boast and talk proudly of their former actions, so as to imagine that they will break through every obstruction, and that nothing can stand in the way of their plans and exertions, and even think that they will accomplish everything without the will or knowledge of God.

When we read this history, let us learn that we ought not to be proud of having been strong, or of having succeeded to our wish; for he who hath exalted us will be able to cast us down. And if he reproves the Assyrian for that haughtiness, how much more ought they to be reproved who ascribe to themselves the praise of righteousness and holiness, as if they could be regenerated by their own power; for it cannot be doubted that they rob God of his honour, and claim for themselves what belongs to him!

10. *As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols.* The Assyrian now breaks out into far more outrageous language; for not only does he insult men, but he insults God himself, and even the very gods whom he worshipped. He boasts that the gods, whose protection the other nations enjoyed, could not prevent him from subduing them; and that

the God of Israel, in whom Jerusalem and Samaria trusted, would not prevent him any more than they. Wicked men are so proud that they attribute to their own strength the victories which they achieve, and do not hesitate to exalt themselves against God and all that is worshipped. They allege, indeed, that they pay homage to the objects of their own worship, that is, to the idols which they have contrived for themselves, and bow before them, and offer sacrifices to them, by which they give some indication that they ascribe their victories to the gods; but afterwards, as Habakkuk says of Nebuchadnezzar, *they burn incense to their own net, and sacrifice to their drag*, (Hab. i. 16;) that is, by boasting of their exploits, wisdom, sagacity, and perseverance. Their hypocrisy is exposed, and their secret thoughts, which lay concealed under those folds of hypocrisy, are revealed, when they immediately claim for themselves what they appeared to ascribe to the objects of their worship. We need not wonder, therefore, that Sennacherib exalted himself against all that is worshipped, for that is the result of ungodliness.

There are two ways in which his blasphemy is expressed. First, he exalts himself above God, and thinks that he will be stronger than God; and, secondly, he makes no distinction between God and the false gods. He sufficiently displayed his ungodliness, when he exalted himself alone even above idols; for although they are nothing but idols, yet as their worshippers ascribe to them some power and divinity, if they scoff at idols, they show that they despise every object of worship; for they treat idols with the same contempt as if they had had to do with God himself. Their own conscience testifies, therefore, that they carry on war against God, and they have no excuse arising from ignorance; for they think that God dwells in graven images. If that tyrant despised Apollo or Jupiter, he undoubtedly despised them, not as idols, but as having in them something divine. The second blasphemy of the tyrant was, that he placed the living God on the same level with the false gods of the heathen, and dared to scoff at him as well as at the others, and to ridicule the confidence of Israel, as if no greater power belonged to God than to idols.

12. *But it shall come to pass.* Hitherto the Prophet had explained what would be the pride of the Assyrian, after having obtained a victory over Israel; but now he foretells what will happen to the Assyrian himself, and what will be the purpose of God against him. Wicked men do everything in the same manner as if God were not in heaven, and could not frustrate their designs. What else is the meaning of those haughty words, *My hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols,* than this, that he thought that he would vanquish all the gods? But God opposes his designs, and, after having made use of his agency, punishes himself also.

This verse contains two clauses. First, he declares that God will punish a wicked king. Secondly, he suggests that the time is not yet come, in order to encourage believers to the exercise of patience. He foretells that the time which God regards as fit for doing it will be, when he shall have chastised the sins of his Church; in the same manner as if the master of a house were to settle the disturbances of his own family. The object which he has in view is, that believers may not give way to despondency, when they behold a wicked tyrant in such a state of exultation, and may not abandon the hope of salvation, as if it were impossible to restrain him.

I will visit upon the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria.[1] God promises, in a word, that after having permitted the Assyrian to plume himself beyond measure, he will in his turn be an avenger; for it belongs to him to repress the pride of the flesh, which is connected with sacrilege. Accordingly, the preposition עַל (*gnăl*)[2] is emphatic, as if it declared that the Assyrian will not be protected by his loftiness from undergoing punishment. *Fruit* is here taken in a metaphorical sense, for wicked men think that they are happy and prosperous when they swell with pride, as if they gathered some *fruit.* He places in the foreground *the heart* which is the seat of pride, and which, when it swells with haughtiness, pours out fierceness and cruelty. Afterwards he adds *the eyes,* by which the inward feelings of the heart

[1] *I will punish* (margin, Heb. *visit upon*) *the fruit of the stout heart* —Eng. Ver.

[2] *Upon.*

are manifested, and which, by being lifted up, are the heralds of secret vice. To whatever extent the Assyrian, in his pride, may elevate himself, God testifies that he has in his own power the means of suddenly changing his glory into dishonour and reproach. Accordingly, he includes contempt, scorn, disdain, and haughty looks, indicative of excessive confidence, which are usually beheld in proud men.

I will visit. He introduces God as speaking, because that which God utters with his own mouth is more impressive, (ἐμφατικώτερον,) than if he spoke by the mouth of the Prophet. Hence draw a general doctrine. God cannot endure the arrogance of proud men, without suppressing it; for he wages incessant war with the haughty and disdainful. (Prov. iii. 34; James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5.)

When the LORD *shall have finished his whole work.* Observe how, in order to repress immoderate haste, the Prophet added this by way of limitation; for as soon as we see a proud man, we wonder that the Lord endures him. Isaiah here shows that God endures that proud tyrant, whatever may be the insolence with which he vaunts and exalts himself, because he chose to make use of his agency, and that the seasonable time for the Lord's destruction of the wicked is not always at hand, but that we ought to wait patiently for it. When he shall have chastised the kingdom of Judah, as if he were bringing the members of the family into a state of submission, he will not be slow or sluggish in punishing a foreign enemy; as a father commonly throws away or breaks the rod with which he chastised his son.

His whole work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem. By a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) *Mount Zion* is here put for the Church, and *Jerusalem* is employed in the same sense, in order that by means of the Temple and the royal city, as the head, he might describe the whole body, and by means of the most important part might describe the whole kingdom. He calls it *the whole work*, because through our foolish haste we would draw away God from his *work*, though it were only begun. More especially, our wrath against wicked men rages so strongly, that it is difficult to restrain our impatience, if God

do not instantly comply with our wish in punishing them To mitigate this fervour, he bids them allow full and ampl time for God's fatherly chastisements.

The whole work denotes a proper measure. This is a use ful and highly consolatory doctrine; for we see wicked men in a wonderfully arrogant and seemingly triumphant man ner, mocking God, and uttering reproaches and slander against his doctrine, so that hardly any words can expres their insolence. If the Lord would comply with our wish he would immediately hasten to subdue and destroy them But he wishes first to humble his Church by means c them.

On Mount Zion and on Jerusalem. He does not no speak of Syrians or Egyptians, but of the Jews, of *Zion,* c the Temple and the habitation which he was pleased to con secrate to himself. Thus, at the present day, there are var ous diseases of the Church, which the Lord determines t heal and remove. He has indeed begun to do so; but w are mistaken if we think that the *work* is finished; and h will not cease till he has subdued us, so that we may b moved by the true fear of him, and may submit to his yok with becoming modesty and gentleness. We need not won der, therefore, that he gives a loose rein to tyrants, an hitherto permits them to rage against the Church. But th consolation is at hand. When he shall have made use c their agency in chastising the Church, *he will visit* the pride and arrogance. And we need not wonder if God, b striking his elect first of all, expresses in this manner h peculiar regard for their salvation. *Judgment must* there fore *begin at the house of God,* and must afterwards extend t those who are without, who will endure chastisements sti more severe.

13. *For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I hav done it.* The Prophet again repeats the highly blasphemou words which the Assyrian uttered; for he ascribes to h *power* and *wisdom* all the victories which he obtained. B *strength of hand* he means vast armies collected out of var ous nations. Yet at the same time he boasts of being warlike king, as those blusterers are wont to claim the prais

of everything that was done under their direction, though they were enjoying the luxury and ease of a retired life. Afterwards he boasts that he was *cautious* and *wary*, to use an ordinary phrase of our own, (*J'ay esté bien entendu et expert,*) *I was very skilful and clever.* But there can be no doubt whatever that he bestows this honourable appellation on the tricks and dishonest cunning by which he had gained advantage over his neighbours. For what are the stratagems of kings and princes? To disturb the peace by indirect methods, to invent pretences for quarrels, to sow the seeds of discord, and, in a word, by their artifices to level all distinctions.

I have removed the boundaries of the nations. This means, "I have extended the boundaries of my dominion, and have added other countries to my territories, so as to *remove their boundary* and limit." Just as if we were to say that the King of France *removed the boundaries* of Brittany, Burgundy, Aquitaine, Provence, and other countries, when he united them to his own kingdom. He likewise adds, "that nothing was so secret or concealed as not to become his prey;" as if he had said that by his sagacity he drew the neighbouring countries into his nets, fished their treasures, and brought into his possession all that lay concealed.

14. *And my hand hath found as a nest.* He adds, that it cost him no trouble to vanquish kings and amass their wealth; and hé illustrates this by a comparison. As if one were to seek *a nest and find one* deserted by the birds, and consequently to take the eggs without difficulty; for if the parent birds were sitting on the eggs, having an instinctive desire to protect their *nest*, they would either fly at the robber, and attack him with their bill, or by loud and unpleasant noises endeavour to drive him away. But this tyrant boasts that there was no one who ventured so much as *to open the mouth* against him, and therefore that he had no difficulty in bringing all the kingdoms under his dominion. Accordingly, he lays claim to all these things, and attributes them to his wisdom, and makes no acknowledgment of the providence of God. These boastful pretensions the Prophet has purposely related as coming from the despot's own mouth, in order to

show that they were so many bellows to kindle the judgmen of God; for among men this haughtiness could not be en dured, and how would not God restrain it?

15. *Shall the axe boast?* He now ridicules more strongl the mad effrontery of the Assyrians in imagining that h could create mountains of gold; for he tells us that th case is the same as if *an axe* or *a hammer* should despise th hand which sets them in motion, and should be proud of thei activity, though it is manifest that they have no power o their own to move. But before explaining the subject mor fully, I shall touch briefly on the words.

Like the rising up of a rod against him that raiseth it.[1] Thi second class of the verse is somewhat obscure. The matte is plain enough, but in the form of expression there is som ambiguity, in consequence of which commentators greatl differ. Yet, when I examine the matter closely, the render ing which I have given appears to flow more naturally tha the others. "What is this? If a staff rise against the han of him that raiseth it, and forget that it is wood, what shocking exhibition will it be!" For it is not uncommo that the particle אֵת, (*ĕth,*) which is the sign of the accusa tive, should mean *against;* and the copulative ו (*vau*) is ofte superfluous. We shall thus have a meaning which is not am biguous, and which agrees with the words of the Prophet He formerly reproached the Assyrian for ascribing to hi schemes and his army the victories which he had gained He now says, that in this manner he boasts against God, jus as if *an axe,* reckoning as nothing the hand of him that cuts claimed the praise of a workman, or a staff, as if it were no dead wood and without any strength of its own, rose u against him that wielded it.

Hence we learn that men rise up against God, whenever they ascribe to themselves more than is proper, and that i such cases they war not with men but with God himself Away, then, with those proud and blasphemous expressions

[1] *As if the rod should shake* itself *against them that lift it up.* Margin or, *as if a rod should shake them that lift it up.*—Eng. Ver. Our tran slators were uncertain whether אֵת (*ĕth*) was the sign of the accusativ or a preposition.—*Ed.*

"By my power and wisdom and perseverance I have done and contrived and accomplished these things;" *for the* LORD *is a jealous God,* (Exod. xx. 5,) *and does not permit his glory to be given to another!* (Isa. xlii. 8; xlviii. 11.)

We must attend to those comparisons by which he likens men to instruments; and we must not view it as referring to the universal providence by which all creatures are governed, as some do, who acknowledge that all the creatures are moved by God, because they cannot deny it, but add, that each of them is driven according to its nature, as the sun, the moon, the heavens, and such like. Thus they imagine that man is driven hither and thither by his own choice and by free-will; because God does nothing more than continue that power which he once bestowed at the beginning. Their false explanation amounts to this, that the whole machinery of the world is upheld by the hand of God, but that his providence is not interposed to regulate particular movements. Thus they ascribe to God the rain and the fair weather because he is the Author of nature, but contend that, strictly speaking, God commands nothing, that the rain is produced by vapours, and that fair weather also is produced by its natural causes. But this confused direction, which they leave to God, is hardly the thousandth part of that government which he claims for himself. Justly, therefore, does Isaiah show that God presides over individual acts, as they call them, so as to move men, like rods, in whatever way he pleases, to guide their plans, to direct their efforts; and, in a word, to regulate their determinations, in order to inform us that everything depends on his providence, and not on the caprice of wicked men.

It is objected, that it would be absurd to call men *axes* and *swords,* so as to take away from them will and judgment, and everything that distinguishes them from inanimate creatures, and to make them, not men, but stocks and stones. But the answer is at hand. Though God compares men to stones, it does not follow that they resemble them in all respects. No one thing is exactly like another, but they agree in some points; for as a staff cannot move itself in any direction, and yet is fit for inflicting blows, so wicked

men have something which belongs to them by nature, and yet they cannot be moved hither and thither, without being directed by the providence and secret decree of God. This fitness of things, if we may so call it, is no reason why the action should not be ascribed entirely to God alone.

But the question about the will of man is unseasonably introduced on the present occasion. If God controls the purposes of men, and turns their thoughts and exertions to whatever purpose he pleases, men do not therefore cease to form plans and to engage in this or the other undertaking. We must not suppose that there is a violent compulsion, as if God dragged them against their will; but in a wonderful and inconceivable manner he regulates all the movements of men, so that they still have the exercise of their will.

In this passage Isaiah chiefly shows that all the efforts of men are fruitless, if God do not grant them success; and therefore that the Assyrian, even if he had attempted everything, would not have succeeded, if the Lord had not bestowed the victories; and, consequently, that he had no reason for laying claim to the praise of those things in which his success was owing solely to God. This is confirmed by another metaphor, that the lifting up of a staff proceeds from the will of him who moves it, and not from the nature of the wood.[1]

16. *Therefore shall the Lord, the* LORD *of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness.* He proceeds with the former doctrine, declaring that the Lord will show to the Assyrian how undeservedly he exalts himself, and will throw down his arrogance, in which he foolishly takes delight. As he

[1] "לא עץ, (*lō gnētz,*) 'the no-wood;' that which is not wood like itself but of a quite different and superior nature. The Hebrews have a peculiar way of joining the negative particle לא (*lō*) to a noun, to signify in a strong manner a total negation of the thing expressed by the noun.

"How hast thou given help ללא כח (*lēlō chōăch*) to the no-strength?

"And saved the arm, לא עז (*lō gnōz*), of the no-power?

"How hast thou given counsel ללא חכמה (*lĕlō chŏchmāh*) to the no-wisdom?

"That is, to the man totally deprived of strength, power, and wisdom. (Job xxvi. 2, 3.) So here לא עץ (*lō gnētz*) means him who is far from being an inert piece of wood, but is an animated and active being; not an instrument, but an agent."—*Lowth.*

trusted in his wealth and his forces, Isaiah declares that the Lord will take them away; and he does so under the metaphor of *fatness* and *leanness*. By the word *fatness* he means both riches and warlike power, in which he placed too much confidence; as if he had said, "Everything *fat* and *rich* that he possesses, the Lord will make the whole of it *lean*." It is not uncommon to compare prosperity to *fatness;* for as horses which are too *fat* become refractory, so as to throw the rider or kick when any one comes near them, so among men abundance produces fierceness of disposition, which is subdued by *leanness*.

And under his glory he shall kindle a burning. There is great beauty in the comparison, that *a fire will be laid under his glory;* for it means, that the greater the splendour of his prosperity, so much the more abundant will be the fuel for the conflagration. Yet it likewise shows that he will be utterly reduced to nothing; as if one were to cut down a tree from the roots, or overturn a house from the foundation. If nothing more than the branches of a tree be cut down, it quickly sprouts again; or if the roof of a house be consumed by fire, the other parts of it remain uninjured. He therefore leaves him nothing, but asserts that he will be brought down by utter destruction.

As the burning of a fire.[1] The particle *as*, which points out the comparison, does not mean that the language is metaphorical, but rather that the burning will be such as to consume utterly the glory of the Assyrian.

17. *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire.* There is an elegant allusion to that burning by which he threatened that he would consume the Assyrians. In *fire* there are two things, light and heat. As the Lord consumes the enemies by his heat, so he enlightens the godly by his light. It is very customary that God is sometimes called *a devouring fire*, (Deut. iv. 24, and ix. 3; Heb. xii. 29,) and sometimes, in a different point of view, he is called *light*, (Isa. lx. 20; Micah vii. 8,) because his power produces contrary effects on the godly and the ungodly. When he shines on the godly, he imparts life and nourishment to them, but he consumes

[1] *Like the burning of a fire.*—Eng. Ver.

and destroys the ungodly. In a word, while he threatens destruction to the Assyrians, he likewise brings comfort to the godly; and he does so in two ways, first, because they will see that God revenges the injuries which they have received, and, secondly, that they will be cheered by his light, and will thus receive a new life.

And his Holy One for a flame. What that *light* is he states plainly, and without a metaphor, when he adds, *his Holy One,* so that it is unnecessary to make a more lengthened exposition. The meaning is, that he determines to protect that people which he hath chosen, and which he hath separated from the rest of the nations to be a peculiar people to himself.

And it shall devour its thorns and briers in one day. He now shows that the favour of God, which shines in Israel, will be like a fire to consume enemies. *In one day* means, that he will burn them with a sudden and unexpected conflagration. It denotes an uncommon and dreadful burning, which usually overtakes the wicked suddenly, when they think that all is well with them, and that danger is at a great distance. He next shows that, whatever defences they may put forth, they will be like *tow,* which, as soon as it is set on fire, will instantly be consumed.

18. *And shall consume the glory of his forest.* He goes on with the same comparison of a *burning,* and declares that the fire will consume both the highest and the lowest, and will leave nothing uninjured. It is possible that a fire might destroy the higher parts of a building, and might leave the lower parts unaffected.

And of his fruitful field. I do not think that כרמל (*Carmel*) is here a proper name, but rather an appellative, denoting a rich and fertile soil; for to say that *Carmel* was held as belonging to the dominion of the king of Assyria, would have been inadmissible. The meaning therefore is, that not only will destruction overtake his *forests,* but the corn will be consumed by the same fire; for it will not only range over the heights, but will penetrate into the lowest places.

From the soul even to the flesh. This comparison is taken

from man. As man consists of a *body* and a *soul*, so each part of him is liable to separate diseases. It frequently happens that, when the *soul* is healthy, the *body* is diseased; and often the reverse takes place; but when both are unhealthy at the same time, the case is most dangerous. By this comparison, therefore, he threatens that the Assyrians will have nothing safe or sound, but that they will be devoted to utter destruction, because they will perish from *the flesh* even to the *soul;* not that *souls* are mortal, but because the vengeance of God will fall upon them also. This is truly dreadful; for the design of chastisements is, *that the spirit may be saved, though the flesh be destroyed,* (1 Cor. v. 5;) but when *the spirit* also is involved in the destruction, what can be said or imagined that is more miserable? The flame only scorches the godly, but does not consume them as it consumes the ungodly, in whom it finds nothing but fuel fit for burning.

And it shall be as the fainting of a standard-bearer. There is an allusion in the words of the Prophet, which cannot be conveyed in another language. The meaning is the same as in the other comparisons, that there will be utter destruction, like the complete rout of an army when the standard has been taken. When the ensigns have been taken, it is commonly followed by a great slaughter; and when historians describe a fearful carnage, they tell us that the ensigns were taken. He does not threaten these things against the Assyrians on their own account, that they may receive advantage from the warning or may be led to repentance, but to yield consolation to the godly, that they may not think that the Assyrians will pass unpunished when they raged so fiercely against the people of God, or entertain fears either that the Lord has forgotten his promise, or that he cannot frustrate their designs. If the Prophet had not put them on their guard, many scruples of this kind might have arisen in their minds.

19. *And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be a number.*[1] When he adds that *the remnant of them will be a*

[1] *And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few.* (Margin, Heb. *number.*)—Eng. Ver.

number, he employs a Hebrew idiom to express that *they will be few;* and thus he only confirms the former statement, that the devastation produced, after the calamity which God will bring on the Assyrians, will be so great that there will be no difficulty in counting them.

That a child may number them. He goes so far as to say, that they will be so few that those who are left of them may be counted even by *a child;* for *children* have difficulty in counting as far as three or four. Accordingly, the kingdom of the Assyrians was formerly like some vast *forest;* but when *the trees* have been hewn and thrown down, those which are left are few, and scattered at great distances from each other.

20. *It shall be in that day.* Returning now to the elect people, he describes the result of the chastisement which was at hand. As it is painful and disagreeable to us to endure calamities and afflictions, and as we refuse them so far as lies in our power, the Lord points out to us the result of them, that we may be taught to consider the design of them, and may thus bear more patiently: as if he had said, "You would wish that the Assyrians were driven to a great distance from you, and that you could live in comfort and safety. But consider, that this chastisement is as necessary as medicine would be for curing your diseases; for you do not acknowledge the power of God, and you withdraw your confidence from him to give it to wicked men. It is truly wretched to place the hope of salvation in enemies, and to rely on those who aim at nothing but your destruction." In like manner, Israel relied sometimes on the Assyrians and sometimes on the Egyptians.

But shall stay upon the LORD. We ought not to despise this compensation made for the diminished numbers of the people, that the small portion which survived the calamity learned to place their hope in God. Hence we see more clearly how necessary it was that God should chastise Israel. The mitigation which he holds out, that still a remnant is left, among whom the true worship of God is maintained, is fitted to yield very high consolation.

In truth. This phrase is not superfluous; for until the

Lord had afflicted them, all wished to be accounted the children of Abraham—all made profession of the faith, and indiscriminately worshipped God; but it was mere pretence. Isaiah therefore reproves this hypocrisy, and says that their hope will afterwards be true and sincere when they shall have been cleansed from impostures; for although they very haughtily boasted of their confidence in God, still they continued to place their confidence in the assistance of the Assyrians. Consequently, when they shall be chastised by their hand, they will learn to trust in God alone, and will withdraw their heart from the assistance of men. Hence infer that we cannot place our confidence in God unless we altogether withhold our heart from creatures; for we ought to rely on God alone in such a manner as not to think it a hardship to renounce all other grounds of confidence. Where this perfect confidence does not exist, there is no room for *truth;* for *the heart is divided and double.* (Ps. xii. 2.)

21. *A remnant shall return.* This is a confirmation of the former statement. Yet in the words שְׁאָר יָשׁוּב, (*Shĕār Yāshūb,*) *a remnant shall return,* there appears to be an allusion to that passage in which Isaiah's son was called *Shear-jashub.* (Is. vii. 3.) In our observations on it, we stated that this peculiar name was given him in reference to the event, that it might be regarded as a pledge of the future deliverance concerning which his father prophesied. It was necessary that the Jews should be confirmed in various ways, that they might be convinced that the Lord would at length bring them back. This is also the design of what he immediately adds—

To the mighty God; that is, to him whom the people, after having returned from their former apostasy, will acknowledge to be the guardian of their salvation. This attribute, *mighty,* is ascribed to God for the sake of the occasion on which the words were used. He might have thought it sufficient to have expressed *power* by the name אֵל, (*El,*) *God,* which also signifies *mighty;* but he chose likewise to add to it גִּבּוֹר, (*gibbōr,*) that is, *strong* or *mighty,* in order to excite the people to greater confidence. How was it possible for the people to betake themselves to the Assyrians

and Egyptians, but because they did not think that God was sufficient for them? This is the source of all evils, when we are not fully convinced that in God is everything that can be desired for our salvation.

22. *For though thy people be.* He casts down hypocrites from foolish confidence; for they reckoned it enough to be the descendants of holy Abraham according to the flesh, and, therefore, on the sole ground of their birth, they wished to be accounted holy. Yet he exhorts the godly to patience, that they may learn to await calmly that calamity and diminution of their number, lest, when it took place, it should be unexpected, and give them uneasiness. He therefore comforts them, that they may not be grieved at so great desolation; for the Lord will at least collect *a remnant* of it.

The consumption decreed. כלה (*chalah*) means *to finish*, and it means also *to consume*. The latter is more appropriate. He calls this diminution of the people a *consumption*, and one that is *completed;* for he employs exaggerated language, the import of which is, that they were not far from utter extermination, there being very few that were saved.

The word *Israel* may be taken either in the genitive case, *of Israel*, or in the vocative case, *O Israel*,[1] so that in this way he addresses the patriarch Jacob, or all the godly under his name. But it is of little importance, for the meaning is the same, in whichsoever of these ways it be taken; and therefore it may be read in the genitive case, *of Israel*. Yet I am more inclined to view it as a proper name, to denote the true, and not the spurious Israelite. The bold address to the patriarch has a striking effect; for God, addressing a dead man, declares to the living that what he had formerly promised, (Gen. xiii. 16, and xxii. 17,) that the posterity of Abraham would be *like the sand of the sea*, did not apply to a promiscuous multitude, which had apostatized from godliness, but that there would be a kind of interruption in a corrupt nation, till shortly afterwards it should be renewed.

[1] That is, the passage may either be rendered, *Though thy people of Israel be as the sand of the sea;* or, *Though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea.—Ed.*

Overflowing with righteousness, or *overflowing righteousness.*[1] Another consolation is added, that this very small company *will overflow righteousness.* When we see the Church distressed by such heavy calamities, that we think that it cannot be far from destruction, we are in danger of giving way to despondency, and of entertaining doubts about the mercy of God. Those whose minds are impressed with just views of the judgment of God, feel that this is the severest of all temptations. It was therefore necessary that godly minds should be fortified against it, that they might soothe their grief by pondering the benefit which would result from this calamity. The benefit was, that *righteousness would overflow* the whole world like a river; and he had formerly noticed this, when he said (ver. 20) that *the remnant would trust in God in truth.*

The word *righteousness* is explained in various ways. Some refer it to the preaching of the gospel, because by means of it, as Paul says, *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,* (Rom. i. 17;) and by the agency of the Apostles, who were a small remnant of the Jews, it spread over the whole world. (Mark xvi. 15.) Others choose rather to view it as meaning that that *consumption* was an evidence and proof of the *righteousness* of God in inflicting punishments so severe on his own people. But I prefer a more general exposition of it, namely, "This *consumption* will be sufficient to fill the whole world with *righteousness.* The *remnant* which shall survive it, though small, will be sufficient to cause such rivers of *righteousness* to flow, that the whole world shall be *overflowed* by them."

23. *For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption.* This repetition again wounds the self-complacency of those who proudly despised God. It was almost incredible that the Jews, to whom so many promises had been given, and with whom God had made *an everlasting covenant,* should perish, as it were, in an instant; and it appeared to be even inconsistent with the unchangeable nature of God. The Prophet therefore declares that *the Lord* is the author of

[1] *Shall overflow with* (Heb. *in,* or, *among*) *righteousness.*—Eng. Ver.

this *consumption*, in order to repress the pride of wicked men, who, relying on their present prosperity, thought that they were beyond all danger, and, swelling with that confidence, ridiculed all threats and warnings. "God," says he, "will reduce your land to a desert, so that in the very midst it will be desolate, and will resemble a wilderness."

In the midst of all the land. By *the midst of the land* he means its very heart, that is, its most fortified and best defended places. Some think that the word נהרצה (*nĕhĕrātzāh*) is an adjective, *determined;* but for my part I view it as a substantive, *consummation;*[1] and in this sense it is used by Daniel and in other passages. (Dan. ix. 27.)

Paul quotes this passage, (Rom. ix. 28,) but in somewhat different words from what the Prophet uses; for he follows the ordinary translation which at that time was generally used. Though Paul wrote correctly and faithfully, and in accordance with the Prophet's real meaning, yet the words which he quotes from the Greek translation have led many to depart from what the Prophet actually meant. The Greek translator having used the word λόγος, (*logos,*) that is, *a discourse,* many have entered into discussions about the Gospel, and have said that it denotes the repeal of the law, because it puts an end to ceremonies and figures, and therefore that it is a short and concise *discourse,* by which we are freed from the burden of the law under which the people groaned. But that has nothing to do with the Prophet's meaning; for here he says that the *consumption* is a *diminution,* by which the people will be almost ruined. Paul's design is not different, and the Greek translators meant nothing else; for by λόγος (*logos*) they meant what is expressed by the Hebrew word דבר, (*dābār.*) Though the Prophet does not make use of the word דבר, (*dābār,*) yet the word which he uses means *a thing consumed,* that is, *consumption,* and the meaning of both words is the same. In short, Paul there repeats (Rom. ix. 28) what Isaiah had said in this passage about the future *consumption* of the people, and shows that this prediction was chiefly fulfilled in his own time, when the Jews were cut

[1] The Author's version is, *because a consumption and consummation will the Lord Jehovah of hosts make.—Ed.*

off from the kingdom of God on account of their ingratitude, and but *a small remnant* (Is. i. 9, and x. 22) was preserved.

24. *Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts.* He goes on with the same consolation, which belongs to the godly alone, who at that time, undoubtedly, were few in number. A great number of persons gloried in the name of God, and wished to be accounted his people; but there were few who actually performed what they professed in words; and, therefore, he does not address all without reserve, but only those who needed consolation. The kingdom having been destroyed, they might entertain fears about themselves and their affairs, and might judge of their own condition from that of others, and therefore it was necessary to comfort them. This distinction ought to be observed, for otherwise it would be inconsistent to address to the same persons statements so different.

And shall lift up his staff against thee in the way of Egypt.[1] He adds a ground of consolation, namely, that that calamity will be nothing else than *the lifting up of a rod* to chastise, but not to destroy them. The preposition ב (*beth*) denotes resemblance. דרך (*dĕrĕch*) means *a pattern*, and therefore I render it, *after the pattern of Egypt.* As if he had said, "Though the Assyrian be cruel, and in many ways aim at thy destruction, yet he shall only wound, he shall not slay thee." He therefore mentioned the pattern of the Egyptian bondage, which was indeed very wretched, but yet was not deadly. (Exod. i. 14, and xii. 51.) It is customary with the Prophets, amidst perplexity or disorder, to remind the people to contemplate that deliverance by which God miraculously rescued them from the hands of Pharaoh, who was a most cruel tyrant. The meaning therefore is, "As the Lord was at that time victorious, and destroyed the Egyptians who had leagued for your destruction, so now he will quickly vanquish the Assyrians."

Others render it, *in the way of Egypt,* because the Assyrians made war against the Jews on account of the Egyptians. But that exposition cannot be admitted; and if we carefully examine the matter, it will be found that there is

[1] *After the manner of Egypt.*—Eng. Ver.

none more appropriate than that which I have proposed, and which is also approved by the most learned commentators. There are two clauses which form a contrast; the oppression which the Egyptians laid upon them, and the calamity which should be inflicted soon afterwards by the Assyrians. "As the oppression of the Egyptians was not deadly, so neither will the oppression of the Assyrians be. You have had experience of my strength and power against Pharaoh, and so will you find it on Sennacherib." If we did not explain the clauses in this way, they would not agree with each other.

25. *But yet a little while.* He means not only the siege of Jerusalem, when Sennacherib surrounded it with a numerous army, (2 Kings xviii. 17,) but likewise the rest of the calamities, when Jerusalem was overthrown, (2 Kings xxv. 4,) the Temple razed, and the inhabitants taken prisoners; for against those dreadful calamities it was necessary that the godly should be fortified by these promises. This ought to be carefully observed; for if we neglect it, as other commentators do, we shall not be able to see how the statements agree. Accordingly, the captivity of the people might be called *a consumption;* for Babylon was like a grave, and banishment was like death. But when the danger was immediate and urgent, and Sennacherib attacked them with his army, and various straits were felt by them in that siege, this consolation was needful; for Judea seemed to be utterly ruined, and to outward appearance no hope of safety was left.

My fury and indignation shall be spent.[1] The consolation corresponds to this state of things. "The Lord will spare thee. For a time, indeed, he will delay, and will keep his assistance as it were concealed; but he will at length rescue thee, and will revenge thy enemies whom he has determined utterly to destroy." If it be thought better to interpret כלה (*chālāh*) as meaning to *consume* or *spend*, then he says that *he spends his anger*, in the same way that we speak of *spending* years and our whole life; that is, "I will cherish my anger until I completely destroy the Assyrians." But the word *finish* brings out the meaning more fully; as if he had

[1] *The indignation shall cease, and mine anger.*—Eng. Ver.

said, "until I have discharged all my anger." This is the destruction which he also threatens elsewhere (Is. lii. 1) to the *uncircumcised;* for when the hope of mercy has been taken away, he executes his judgment against the ungodly.

26. *And the* LORD *of hosts will stir up a scourge for him.* Here Isaiah makes use of the word *scourge*, and not *rod*, meaning that the Lord will treat the enemies much more harshly and severely than they had treated the Jews. He threatens them with extermination, and makes it more evident by two examples; first, that of the Midianites, (Judges vii. 25,) who were cut off by a dreadful slaughter in the valley of *Oreb*, which was so named from their leader; and, secondly, that of the Egyptians, whom the Lord, when they pursued after his people, sank in the Red Sea. (Exod. xiv. 27, 28.) In the former passage, he refers to a narrative which was somewhat more recent, and in the latter to one that was more ancient.

Hence we infer that the Lord hath displayed his power in defending his Church, in order that, when our affairs are in the most desperate state, we may remain steadfastly in the faith, and, relying on his grace, we still may cherish a pleasing hope. By means and in ways that are unexpected he often delivers his Church, as he did by the hands of Gideon and Moses. We ought always, therefore, to call to remembrance those benefits, that we may be excited more and more to confidence and perseverance.

Hence we ought also to infer that all the afflictions which we endure are the Lord's rods with which he chastises us; and yet he does not permit Satan or his agents to inflict deadly chastisements upon us. On the other hand, an awful destruction awaits our enemies, as we see in the Midianites and Egyptians. It is therefore no small consolation that, when we compare our condition with theirs, we see them, for a time indeed, in all the madness of joy and of wickedness insulting the children of God, but at the same time learn what a dreadful sentence has been pronounced against them; for they are devoted to deadly and everlasting destruction.

27. *And it shall come to pass in that day.* It is uncertain whether he now speaks of the deliverance which took

place under Zerubbabel, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 2,) or of that wonderful overthrow of Sennacherib, (2 Kings xix. 35,) when he besieged Jerusalem with a huge army. This latter opinion is almost universally preferred; and indeed it appears to be supported by what follows, for immediately afterwards he gives a description of the country, and enumerates the chief places through which Sennacherib should conduct his army, till he arrived at Jerusalem itself, so that there appeared to be nothing at all to hinder him from taking possession of the city. With this opinion I partly agree, but I extend the prediction farther.

Isaiah intends to comfort the godly who were involved in the present distress. It might be thought that the promise failed, and that the calamities which immediately followed were utterly at variance with it. For instance, if the Lord promise to give me food for next year, and yet leave me altogether destitute of it, what faith can I have in a promise so distant, if the Lord do not rescue me from the present distress? Thus, the Lord's promise, in which he had said that he would deliver his people from Babylon, and would continually assist them, may be thought to have failed, when it was exposed to the jaws of that huge wild beast. With the view of meeting this objection, the Prophet includes both promises, that the Lord will be the guardian of his people, till at length he deliver them from death. Some limit it to the slaughter (2 Kings xix. 35) of Sennacherib's army; but as Isaiah promises *the loosing*, or *breaking of the yoke*, I have no doubt that he describes deliverance from captivity. Yet he confirms the promise, that God will not only rescue them from Babylon, but will also aid them against the besieging army of the tyrant, whom he will not suffer to go beyond what has been threatened.

That his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck. He describes that tyranny in two ways, in order to illustrate more fully how great was the blessing of deliverance. If it be thought best to refer it to Sennacherib, he had not laid on the Jews so grievous a yoke. The people paid only some tribute, as we learn from sacred history. (2 Kings xxiii. 33; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3.) Why

then has he employed two names in describing this tyranny? It may be pleaded that he had in his eye the approaching danger; for that tyrant, like a huge beast of prey, had devoured the whole of Judea by his voraciousness, and had oppressed them to such an extent, that it appeared to be almost impossible that his *yoke* could ever be taken off. But I have already explained the view which I prefer, that he describes the uninterrupted course of the favour of God down to the time of redemption.

And the yoke shall be destroyed from the face of the anointing.[1] The phrase, *the face of the anointing*, is explained by some to mean the *fatness* with which *the yoke* is besmeared. But that interpretation is too farfetched. Others more correctly view שֶׁמֶן (*shāmĕn*) as bearing its ordinary signification, and as denoting *anointing* or *oil*. He again reminds them of Christ, and shows that through his kindness they will be delivered from that tyranny. *Anointing* is the name given to that kingdom which the Lord had set apart for himself, and which he therefore wished to keep unspotted and undiminished. When the Prophets intend to applaud the majesty of that kingdom, they speak of the *anointing* which the Lord had bestowed on it as a distinguishing mark, because it was a type of Christ. (Ps. xlv. 7, and lxxxix. 20; Is. lxi. 1; Dan. ix. 24.) Though God established the rest of the kingdoms, still they were in some respects profane; this ranked above them as holy and sacred, because the Lord reigned over Judea in a peculiar manner, and because under this figure of a kingdom he held up Christ to their view. For this reason, also, it was promised to Solomon that his throne would be everlasting. (2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chr. xxii. 10; Ps. lxxxix. 5.) As to the interpretation given by some, that שֶׁמֶן (*shāmĕn*) denotes the king himself, not only is it too farfetched, but it conveys no solid instruction.

The Prophet therefore points out the means of overthrowing that tyranny; for it appeared as if there were no reason to believe that the yoke of so powerful a tyrant would be broken. He shows that this will arise from the heavenly anointing of that kingdom, that all may perceive that this

[1] *Because of the anointing.*—Eng. Ver.

benefit depends on the power of Christ, and not on the ability of man or on chance.

28. *He is come to Aiath.* The siege of the holy city being now at hand, Isaiah sets before their eyes the whole of Sennacherib's march, that the hearts of the godly, by long and careful study of it, may remain steadfast. This delineation was powerfully calculated to allay their fears, when godly men saw that the Assyrians did not move a step but by the appointment of God; for by the mouth of the Prophet he had given a lively description of the whole of that march.[1] It is unnecessary to spend much time in explaining the relative position of the places here named, for it is enough if we understand that Sennacherib marched through those places of which the Jews had been informed.

At Michmash he will lay up his baggage. The words which we render, *He will lay up his baggage* or *armour*, are translated by some, *He hath made a muster;* for פָּקַד (*pākăd*) signifies also to *number*. I do not dislike this interpretation, but prefer the former; for I understand the Prophet to mean that the Assyrian *will lay up his armour*, that is, the provisions, and the rest of the implements of war, *in Michmash*. It is the custom of warriors not to lead forward an army without providing the means of support, which they *lay up* in a safe and convenient place, that the army may be supplied out of it with all that is needful. Under the word *baggage* or *arms*, he includes not only *darts* and *swords*, but all the supplies and provisions of war. The meaning of the word כְּלִי (*chĕlī*) is extensive, and includes every kind of implements, and thus resembles the word (*vasa*) which denotes *vessels* in the Latin language.

29. *They have crossed the ford.*[2] Some understand by this the passage of the Jordan, but I do not know if it could be *crossed* by a *ford* in that quarter.[3] He describes how great

[1] "Here is a lively description of the march of Sennacherib's army, not that related below in chap. xxxvi., but in his first invasion of Judea, when he passed Jerusalem to the northward on his way to Egypt; for so the places here mentioned indicate, stretching in order from the north to the west and south of that capital."—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] *They are gone over the passage.*—Eng. Ver.

[3] "*They have passed the strait.* The strait here mentioned is that of Michmas, a very narrow passage between two sharp hills or rocks, (see

will be the terror when they hear of the approach of the Assyrian, that the whole country will be struck with terror and alarm, so that the Assyrian will subdue it without any difficulty. When such dread has seized their hearts, they will freely surrender at the first attack of the enemy, so that the conquerors will be allowed to ravage at their pleasure. He passes from the singular to the plural number, because he speaks sometimes of the king and sometimes of the whole army.

Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. He mentions *Ramah* in preference to the rest, because it was the nearest town; and he describes the flight of the inhabitants of some towns, as if the mere report had terrified them to such a degree that they gave up their country into the enemy's hand. After having spoken of so great dismay, he adds—

30. *Neigh,*[1] *O daughter of Gallim.* By the word *neigh* he denotes the howling and cries which will be heard at a distance. It is very common, in the Hebrew language, to call cities *daughters.* He says that the howling will be so great that it will be heard even by the neighbouring cities; for at *Laish* will be heard the groanings which will be uttered in *Anathoth.*

31. *Madmenah is removed.* In exaggerated language he describes that city to have been shaken to such a degree, as if it had been *removed* to another place. This relates to the disorderly movements of a people in flight; as if he had said that the inhabitants of that city were thrown into as great a commotion as if the city had been razed to its foundations.

The inhabitants of Gebim have gathered themselves. This may be explained to mean that they are so terrified that they crowd together in a body. Others understand by it, that they rush out in a disorderly manner, as if there were not room for a free passage.

1 Sam. xiv. 4, 5,) where a great army might have been opposed with advantage by a very inferior force. The enemies having *passed the strait* without opposition, shows that all thoughts of making a stand in the open country were given up, and that their only resource was in the strength of the city."—*Lowth.*

[1] *Lift up thy voice.* (Heb. *Cry shrill with thy voice.*)—Eng. Ver.

32. *Yet a day.*[1] Some interpret this, that the Assyrian will yet remain *one day in Nob*, which was a village contiguous to Jerusalem, as Jerome and others declare. But I rather agree with those who think that it means, that he will have a great part of the day before him when he halts there, in order to make preparations for besieging Jerusalem on the following day. He intends to describe the rapid march of the Assyrian, and how near Jerusalem was to utter destruction; as if he had said, that he had but a small part of the journey to perform, and that before *the day* was ended, he would arrive at that city.

He shall shake the hand. This contributes still more to show their terror; for Sennacherib, having conquered the whole country, will threaten Jerusalem, as if he could storm it by the slightest expression of his will.

Against the mountain of the daughter of Zion. By a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) he includes the whole city under the name of *the mountain*, because that part was higher, and commanded a view of the other quarters of the city. From this confidence of the tyrant, he shows that Jerusalem was not far from utter destruction; for the whole country, and even the city, was struck with such terror that none ventured to oppose him. By these details, therefore, the Prophet intended to give a more impressive view of the kindness of God, that it ought to be ascribed to the extraordinary favour and goodness of God, and not to human aid, of which there was none, that Jerusalem was preserved, as if a sheep had been rescued from the jaws of a lion.

Behold, the Lord Jehovah of hosts. Almost all explain this passage as referring to the Assyrians. (2 Kings xix. 35.) They think that the Prophet threatens against them that slaughter with which the Lord destroyed them, after that they had besieged Jerusalem. As if he had spoken in this manner: The Assyrian will indeed be elated with such pride, that as soon as he has seen Jerusalem, he will think that it

[1] "*Yet this day.* One day longer shall the Assyrian be permitted to remain in the vicinity of *Jerusalem*, and to affright *the daughter of Zion.*"—*Stock.*

is in his power. All being struck with such dismay at his approach, that some shall flee and others shall freely surrender themselves, he will imagine that all are subdued under him; but the Lord will quickly reverse his condition, and *lop off those lofty branches.*

But for my own part, when I examine closely the whole passage, and especially what he adds soon afterwards about *Lebanon,* and the consolation which immediately follows, I think that this passage ought to be referred to the Jews themselves. Isaiah therefore proceeds, in my opinion, to threaten the calamities which awaited the people. As if he had said, "Not only will he come to *Nob,* but he will spread devastation far and wide over the whole country. Everything in it that is excellent and lofty, he will completely waste and destroy, in the same manner as if one should cut off branches from a tree or cut down a tree from the root."

This interpretation is confirmed by the following chapter, in which the Prophet offers consolation against that calamity; for the consolation agrees with this verse, and is added as an appropriate remedy for soothing grief. Nor do I attach any importance to the division of the chapter, which is often very absurd, and which perplexes the whole of the Prophet's meaning. I think, therefore, that we ought to connect that consolation with these verses, as if there had been no such division.

34. *And he will cut down the thick places of the forest with iron.* There is no difficulty in explaining this metaphor, for it is plain enough that by tall and high trees is denoted all that is powerful, excellent, or lofty. Thus he foretells the destruction and ruin of Judea, which he compares to the *cutting down of a forest;* by which he means that there is nothing so valuable that the enemies will not destroy it, till they have stripped the whole land of its ornaments.

And Lebanon will fall violently. He mentions *Lebanon,* because that mountain, as we all know, was highly celebrated for fruitful and highly valuable trees. Now, if he had been speaking of the Assyrians, it would not have been appropriate to introduce the destruction of *Lebanon.* Hence we infer that the Prophet, in this passage, again threatens

the Jews; and this agrees well with the introduction of the discourse, for it begins with a word which calls attention, *Behold.*

CHAPTER XI.

1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand

1. Sed prodibit virga ex trunco Isai; et surculus de radicibus ejus fructus edet.

2. Et requiescet super eum Spiritus Iehovæ, spiritus sapientiæ et intelligentiæ, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiæ et timoris Iehovæ.

3. Et sagacem illum reddet in timore Iehovæ; non secundum aspectum oculorum suorum judicabit, neque ex auditu aurium suarum arguet.

4. Nam judicabit in justitia pauperes, et in æquitate arguet mansuetis terræ; et percutiet terram virga oris sui, et spiritu labiorum suorum interficiet impium.

5. Et erit justitia balteus lumborum ejus, et fides balteus renum ejus.

6. Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum hœdo accubabit; vitulus, et leo, et pecus pingue pariter; et puer parvus reget eos.

7. Vacca et ursus pascentur; simul accubabunt fœtus eorum. Et leo, quasi bos, comedet paleas.

8. Et oblectabitur infans super foramine aspidis; et super speluncam cerastis qui ablactatus est manum suam mittet.

9. Non nocebunt, neque injuriam inferent in toto monte sanctitatis meæ; quoniam impleta erit terra scientia Iehovæ, tanquam aquis mare operientibus.

10. Et erit in die illa, Radix Isai, quæ stabit in signum populorum,

for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

11. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

12. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

14. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

15. And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make *men* go over dry-shod.

16. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

requiretur a Gentibus, et erit requies ejus gloria.

11. Et erit in die illa, adjiciet Dominus rursus manum suum ad possidendas reliquias populi sui, quæ residuæ erunt ab Assur, et ab Ægypto, a Parthia, ab Arabia, ab Æthiopia, a Perside, a Chaldæa, ab Hamath, et ab insulis maris.

12. Et levabit signum Gentibus, congregabitque ejectos Israel, et dispersiones Iuda congregabit a quatuor plagis terræ.

13. Et abscedet æmulatio Ephraim, et hostes Iuda excidentur. Ephraim non æmulabitur Iuda, nec Iuda anget Ephraim.

14. Involabunt autem in humeros Philistinorum ad occidentem; diripient pariter filios orientis, Ædom et Moab missio manus eorum, et filii Ammon obedientia eorum.

15. Et in nihilum rediget Iehova linguam maris Ægypti; et eriget manum suam super fluvium in fortitudine venti sui; et percutiet illum in septem rivis, et faciet calcari cum calceamentis.

16. Et erit semita reliquiis populi ejus, quæ residuæ erunt ab Assur, quemadmodum fuit Israel, in die qua ascendit e terra Ægypti.

1. *But there shall come forth a rod.* As the description of such dreadful calamities might terrify the godly, and give them reason for despair, it was necessary to hold out consolation; for when the kingdom was destroyed, cities thrown down, and desolation spread over the whole country, there might have been nothing left but grief and lamentation; and therefore they might have tottered and fallen, or been greatly discouraged, if the Lord had not provided for them this consolation. He therefore declares what the Lord will

afterwards do, and in what manner he will restore that kingdom.

He pursues the metaphor which he employed towards the conclusion of the former chapter; for he had said that Jerusalem would be destroyed, as if *a forest were* consumed by a single conflagration. (Isa. x. 33, 34.) Its future desolation would be like that of a country formerly covered with forests, when the trees had been cut down, and nothing could be seen but ashes. That those things which are contrasted may answer to each other, he says, that *out of the stock will come forth a branch*, which will grow into a tree, and spread its branches and fruits far and wide. I have therefore preferred translating גֵּזַע (*gĕzăng*) *a dry stock*, rather than *a root*, though it makes little difference as to the meaning, but the former expresses more fully what the Prophet meant, namely, that though *the stock* be dry, *the branch which shall spring* from it shall be more excellent than all the forests.

Hence we infer that this prediction applies solely to the person of Christ; for till he came no such *branch* arose. It certainly cannot be applied to Hezekiah or Josiah, who, from their very infancy, were brought up in the expectation of occupying a throne. Zerubbabel (Ezra iii. 8) did not attain the thousandth part of that elevated rank which the Prophet extols. We see, therefore, that to the wretched and almost ruined Jews, consolation was held out in the Messiah alone, and that their hope was held in suspense till he appeared. At the time of his appearance, there would have been no hope that the kingdom would be erected and restored, if this promise had not been added; for the family of David appeared to be completely extinct. On this account he does not call him *David*, but *Jesse;* because the rank of that family had sunk so low, that it appeared to be not a royal family, but that of a mean peasant, such as the family of *Jesse* was, when David was unexpectedly called to the government of the kingdom. (1 Sam. xvi. 1; 2 Sam. vii. 8.) So then, having sustained this calamity and lost its ancient renown, it is denominated by the Prophet the family of *Jesse*, because that family had no superiority above any

other. Accordingly, I think that here, and not towards the conclusion of the former chapter, the consolation begins.

Amidst such frightful desolation they might doubt who should be their deliverer. He therefore promises that one *will spring* even out of a dry *trunk;* and he continues, as I mentioned a little before, the same metaphor of *a forest*, because it is far more beautiful than if he had said in plain language that the Messiah would come. Having threatened that the forest would be entirely cut down, he adds, that still *a branch* will arise out of it, to restore the abundance and magnificence of the consumed forest; that is, Christ, who should be the deliverer of the people. How low his beginning was, it is unnecessary to explain. Undoubtedly, he was so far from having anything splendid or attractive, that with the exception of his birth, everything, to the view of the flesh, was inconsistent with the character of the Redeemer. Even his birth was almost obscured; for who would have thought that a poor *carpenter* (Mark vi. 3) was descended from a royal family? Again, where was Christ born, and how had he been brought up? In short, his whole life having been mean and even contemptible, he suffered a most disgraceful death, with which he had to begin his kingdom. Yet he grew to an immeasurable height, like a large tree from a small and feeble seed, as he himself shows, (Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 32,) and as we see by daily examples; for in the uninterrupted progress of his kingdom the same things must happen as were seen in his person.

And the Spirit of the LORD *shall rest upon him.* He now begins to speak of Christ plainly and without a figure; for it was enough to have represented the consolation under that figure, in order that the full contrast between the burning of the wood and its springing up anew might be made manifest. Two states of the people are described by him; for, after having explained the calamity, he next added the hope of restoration, though the commencement of it was from a slender *branch.* But now he plainly shows what will be the nature of the redemption, and what will be the condition of Christ and of his kingdom.

Some think that this should rather be viewed as referring

to Hezekiah ; but how groundless that opinion is we have already shown ;[1] for when he was born, David had still a flourishing reputation, and the rank of royalty belonged to his descendants ; and Hezekiah was very far from attaining that greatness which is shortly afterwards described. Now, hence we infer that the spiritual kingdom of Christ was formerly promised to the ancient people, because his whole strength, power, and majesty, is here made to consist in the gifts of *the Spirit.* Although Christ was not deficient in gifts of this kind, yet as he took upon him our flesh, it was necessary that he should be enriched with them, that we might afterwards be made partakers of all blessings of which otherwise we are destitute ; for *out of his fulness,* as John says, *we must draw as from a fountain.* (John i. 16 ; and vii. 37, 38.)

The Spirit of the LORD. We must keep in view what I mentioned a little ago, that this refers to Christ's human nature ; because he could not be enriched with the gift and grace of the Father, except so far as he became man. Besides, as he came down to us, so he received the gifts of *the Spirit,* that he might bestow them upon us. And this is the *anointing* from which he receives the name of *Christ,* which he imparts to us ; for why are we called *Christians,* but because he admits us to his fellowship, by distributing to us out of his fulness *according to the measure* (Eph. iv. 7) of undeserved liberality ? And undoubtedly this passage does not so much as teach us what Christ is in himself, as what he received from the Father, that he might enrich us with his wealth.

The spirit of wisdom and understanding. Though it is not necessary to bestow great attention on single words, yet if any person wish to draw a slight distinction between *wisdom* and *understanding,* I consider it to be this, that the word *wisdom* comprehends generally all that relates to the regulation of the life, and that *understanding* is added for the sake of explaining it ; for if we are endowed with this *wisdom,* we shall have sagacity enough. *Counsel* means that judgment by which we can thread our way through intricate

[1] See page 372.

affairs; for *understanding* would not be sufficient, if there were not also *counsel*, that we might be able to act with caution in doubtful matters. The word *might* is well enough known. *Knowledge* differs little from *understanding;* except that it relates more to the act of knowing, and thus declares what has taken place. *The fear of the* LORD means a sincere desire to worship God.

The Prophet does not here enumerate all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as some have thought. Out of this passage the Papists have foolishly and ignorantly drawn their sevenfold grace, and some of the ancients fell into a similar blunder. He enumerates only six kinds; but they have added a seventh out of their own head. But as one error commonly follows another, they have chosen to limit the gifts of *the Spirit* to the number seven, although in other parts of Scripture (John xiv. 17; 2 Tim. i. 7) he receives numerous and lofty commendations drawn from the variety of the effects which he produces. Besides, it is very evident that it is through the kindness of Christ (Gal. v. 22, 23) that we are partakers of other blessings than those which are here enumerated, of meekness, chastity, sobriety, truth, and holiness; for these proceed from none else than from Christ. He does not mention, therefore, all the gifts which were bestowed on Christ, for that was unnecessary; but only shows briefly that Christ came not empty-handed, but well supplied with all gifts, that he might enrich us with them.

If these things had not been added, we might have supposed, as the Jews commonly do, that the restoration of this kingdom was carnal, and might have imagined that Christ was poor and destitute of all blessings. Accordingly, the Prophet afterwards shows that the gifts of the Spirit are laid up in him, first, generally, and next, particularly; that we may go to him to obtain whatever we want. He will enlighten us with the light of *wisdom* and *understanding*, will impart to us *counsel* in difficulties, will make us strong and courageous in battles, will bestow on us the true fear of God, that is, godliness, and, in a word, will communicate to us all that is necessary for our life and salvation. All gifts are here included by the Prophet, so that it is excessively foolish

to attempt to conceal those which do not belong to the present enumeration.

He shows that they dwell in Christ, in order that they may be communicated to us. We are also called his *fellows*, (Ps. xlv. 7,) because strength proceeds from him as the head to the individual members, and in like manner Christ causes his heavenly anointing to flow over the whole body of his Church. Hence it follows that those who are altogether barren and dry have no interest in Christ, and falsely glory in his name. Whenever therefore we feel that we are in want of any of these gifts, let us blame our unbelief; for true faith makes us partakers of all Christ's benefits. We ought therefore to pray to the Lord not to permit the lusts of the flesh to rule in us, that Christ may wholly unite us to himself. It should also be observed, that we ought to ask all blessings from Christ alone; for we are mistaken if we imagine that anything can be obtained from the Father in any other way.

3. *And will make him sagacious.*[1] The verb ריח, (*rīăch,*) which is here put in the Hiphil conjugation, signifies literally *to smell;* but may also be explained in an active sense, as meaning *to give a keen smell;* which agrees better, I think, with this passage, so that this sagacity may be also included among the gifts of the Spirit. And this effect is peculiarly applicable to the person of Christ, namely, that far beyond what the godly are able to conceive, he is endowed with shrewd discernment for governing his people. We ought to attend, first of all, to the metaphor in the verb *smell,* which means that Christ will be so shrewd that he will not need to learn from what he hears, or from what he sees; for by *smelling* alone he will perceive what would otherwise be unknown.[2]

In the fear of the Lord. This phrase is viewed by the greater part of commentators as meaning that all the feel-

[1] *And shall make him of quick understanding.* (Heb. *scent,* or *smell.*) —Eng. Ver.

[2] "*And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah.* His delight, והריחו, (*hărīchō,*) *his snuffing up with pleasure,* his pleasurable sensations. So the verb ריח (*rīăch*) signifies, when followed by the preposition ב, as in Lev. xxvi. 31; Amos v. 21. The expression is equivalent to, but stronger than that of David in Ps. i. 2, בתורת יהוה חפצו, (*bĕthōrăth Yĕhōvāh Chĕphtzō,*) *in the law of the* Lord *is his delight.*"—*Stock.*

ings of the heart will be manifest to Christ, so that he will easily judge who are the sincere worshippers of God. But let the reader inquire if it be not a more appropriate meaning, that *the fear of God* denotes a fixed rule of judging. He expressly distinguishes between the heavenly judgment of Christ and earthly judgments, in order to inform us, that the outward mask of holiness or uprightness is of no avail in his presence.

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes. The meaning is, "When we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, not only will outward actions be brought to trial after the manner of human governments, but the life of men will be examined by the standard of true godliness. It does not belong to man to penetrate into the hearts; and those whom we suppose to be very excellent men have frequently nothing but a hollow mask; but Christ judges not from outward appearance, (Luke xi. 17; John ii. 25,) for he thoroughly knows and searches our inmost thoughts. His *judgment*, therefore, is quite different from that of men, who, with all their acuteness and quick sagacity, fall into the most shameful mistakes." Hence it follows that none can be the true worshippers of God but those whom Christ approves. They cannot obtain his approbation, unless they offer a pure and upright mind; for a false and hollow mask cannot deceive him.

4. *For he will judge the poor in righteousness.*[1] Here he shows that Christ will be the guardian of *the poor*, or, he points out the persons to whom the grace of Christ strictly belongs, namely, to the *poor* or *meek;* that is, to those who, humbled by a conviction of their poverty, have laid aside those proud and lofty dispositions which commonly swell the minds of men, till they have learned to be meek through the subduing influence of the word of God. He therefore declares that he will be the protector and guardian, not of all men whatsoever, but of those who know that they are *poor*, and destitute of everything good. This was also declared by Christ to John's disciples, when he said that *the gospel is preached to the poor.* (Matt. xi. 5.) Who are they that are capable of receiving this doctrine? Not all men without ex-

[1] *But with righteousness shall he judge the poor.*—Eng. Ver.

ception, but those who, having laid aside the glory of the flesh, betake themselves to that heavenly protection.

There is, therefore, an implied contrast, namely, that Christ does not rule over the rich, that is, over those who are swelled with a false opinion of themselves. Though he invites all men to come to him, still the greater part refuse to submit to his government. The *poor* alone allow themselves to be governed by him. This passage teaches us, that if we are desirous to be protected by the power of Christ, we must lay aside all pride, and put on the spirit of *meekness* and modesty. That spiritual poverty which the Prophet recommends to all the members of Christ is, to have no lofty views, but to be truly humbled by a conviction of our poverty and nakedness, so as to depend on Christ alone. When we have been brought to this state of mind, the faithful King and Guardian will undertake to secure our salvation, and will defend us to the last against all our enemies. We also learn whom Christ invites to come to him: *Come to me, all ye that labour and are burdened.* (Matt. xi. 28.) We must, therefore, *labour* and be pressed down by the weight of our *burden*, if we wish to feel and know his assistance.

And will reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. We must attend to the order which is here observed by the Prophet. He places *poverty* first, and then *meekness;* because we must first be *poor* before we become *meek.* So long as we think *that we are somebody,* (Acts v. 36,) and are carried away by a vain confidence in ourselves, our heart is filled with pride and self-conceit, and cannot yield or submit; but when we are convinced of our poverty, we lose courage, and, subdued and overpowered, begin to groan under the burden. The condition of Christ's people, therefore, is here described, as he had formerly illustrated the nature of the king himself. Hence also we ought to learn, that those precious gifts of the Spirit with which we saw a little before that Christ was furnished,[1] are not bestowed by him on all men whatsoever, but on the *poor* and the *meek;* for the word *judge* denotes government, a very important part of which is, that Christ imparts to us the gifts which he

[1] See page 374.

received from the Father, that he may live in us, and that we may live in him.

And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. The Prophet here extols the efficacy of the word, which is Christ's royal sceptre. By *the rod of his mouth* is meant a sceptre which consists in words, and in the second clause he repeats the same idea by the phrase, *the breath of his lips;* as if he had said, that Christ will have no need to borrow aid from others to cast down his enemies, and to strike down everything that opposes his government; for a mere *breath* or a *word* will be enough. The statement may be general, since believers also must die, so as to be renewed to a spiritual life; and in this sense the gospel is called a sword appropriated for the slaying of sacrifices. (Rom. xv. 16.) But the latter part of the verse calls for a different interpretation. If any one choose to make a distinction, *the striking of the earth* will apply equally to the reprobate and the elect; as the gospel is *a two-edged sword, piercing even to the most hidden and secret feelings of the heart, and discerning the thoughts and affections.* (Heb. iv. 12.) Yet it wounds the former in a very different manner from that in which it wounds the latter. By mortifying in the elect a sinful nature, it kills their lusts, that they may become a living sacrifice, and a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour; but it *strikes* the wicked in a manner altogether destructive, for they rot and die, and to them it is even, as Paul says, *a savour of death to death.* (2 Cor. ii. 16.) I should be willing enough to consider both effects as described here at the same time, were it not that it is opposed by the custom of the Hebrew language; for the Hebrew writers often repeat the same sentiment in different words.

And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. Christ is armed *with the breath of his lips to slay the wicked.* But perhaps this second clause was added by Isaiah for the purpose of amplification; and, indeed, *to slay* is much more than *to strike.* As it belongs to the gospel to cast down all men without exception, its effect on the reprobate may be said to be accidental, *to slay* them with a deadly stroke. In this way the Prophet would add a particular case to the

general statement, intimating that the wicked fall under the sword of Christ to their everlasting destruction, because they are not set apart to be sacrifices.[1] However this may be, this latter clause must undoubtedly be limited to the wicked alone; and it is added, because that efficacy does not immediately appear in the preaching of the gospel, but, on the contrary, many ridicule, and jeer, and treat as a fable all that is said about Christ and his word. But though they do not immediately feel its power, yet they will not be able to escape it, and will at length be slain by a deadly wound.

But the Prophet's meaning, I think, is not yet fully explained; for he does not speak only of the inward feeling by which wicked men are moved, whether they will or not, but of the wickedness itself, which will be removed and driven away by the power and efficacy of this sceptre, as Paul also explains; for he undoubtedly alludes to this passage when he speaks of the destruction of Antichrist. *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.* (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.) Thus he explains to us the meaning of the Prophet; for he shows that Christ will never be without enemies, who will endeavour to overturn his kingdom, and to hinder or retard the course of the gospel; otherwise these words of the Prophet would have been spoken in vain. But Christ will drive away some of their number, and the whole of them together, and their very head and leader, by the sound of his doctrine.

Thus also Paul recommends a twofold use of doctrine, demanding from a pastor that *he shall be qualified not only to teach, but likewise to refute those who oppose.* (Tit. i. 9.) A pastor ought not only to feed his flock, but also to protect and guard them against every injury. This is what Christ performs, and therefore he is provided with necessary armour, that he may contend successfully against the falsehoods of Satan, and the cruelty of tyrants, and every kind of enemies.

Hence it is evident that wicked doctrines cannot be driven

[1] The force of these repeated allusions to Rom. xv. 16 will be best understood by consulting the Author's Commentary on that remarkable passage.—*Ed.*

away by any other method than by the gospel. In vain will the magistrate employ the sword, which undoubtedly he must employ, to restrain wicked teachers and false prophets; in vain, I say, will he attempt all these things, unless this sword of the word go before. (Deut. xiii. 5.) This ought to be carefully observed in opposition to the Papists, who, when the word fails them, betake themselves to new weapons, by the aid of which they think that they will gain the victory. They are even so impudent as to boast that heretics cannot be refuted by the *word*, though both the Prophet and Paul lay down no other method.

When the Prophet says, *by the breath of his lips*, this must not be limited to the person of Christ; for it refers to the word which is preached by his ministers. Christ acts by them in such a manner that he wishes their *mouth* to be reckoned as his *mouth*, and their *lips* as his *lips;* that is, when they speak from his mouth, and faithfully declare his word. (Luke x. 16.) The Prophet does not now send us to secret revelations, that Christ may reign in us, but openly recommends the outward preaching of doctrine, and shows that the gospel serves the purpose of a sceptre in the hand of Christ, so far as it is preached, and so far as it is *oral*, if we may use the expression; otherwise it would have been to no purpose to mention the *mouth* and the *lips*. Hence it follows that all those who reject the outward preaching of the gospel shake off this sceptre, as far as lies in their power, or pull it out of the hand of Christ; not that the efficacy which he mentions depends on the voice of men, but so far as Christ acts by his ministers; for he does not wish that their labour should be fruitless, without sacrificing the elect to obedience, (Rom. xv. 16,) and slaying the reprobate; as Paul in another passage boasts that there will be speedy vengeance against all unbelievers and rebels.

Here we must again call to remembrance what is the nature of Christ's kingdom. As he does not wear a golden crown or employ earthly armour, so he does not rule over the world by the power of arms, or gain authority by gaudy and ostentatious display, or constrain his people by terror and dread; but the doctrine of the gospel is his royal ban-

ner, which assembles believers under his dominion. Where ever, therefore, the doctrine of the Gospel is preached in purity, there we are certain that Christ reigns; and where it is rejected, his government is also set aside. Hence it is evident how foolishly the Papists boast that the Church belongs to them, when they order Christ himself to be silent and cannot endure the sound of his voice, but proclaim aloud with distended cheeks, their own edicts, laws, decrees, and tyrannical regulations.

5. *And righteousness shall be the belt.*[1] Some translate it *girdle;* but as the Prophet represents Christ to us wearing as it were, the emblems of royalty, I have rather translated it *belt,* which is also a royal emblem, in the same manner as the sceptre, which he had assigned to him a little before. When Job speaks of taking away the authority of kings, he says that the Lord will ungird their *belt.* (Job xii. 18.) To be *girded* with a *belt,* therefore, is nothing else than to be exalted to royal authority, as we shall afterwards see in another passage. (Is. xiv. 5.)

The Prophet describes two ornaments belonging to the *belt.* These are *righteousness* and *truth;* unless it be thought that there is a change in the order of construction, as if he had said that Christ will be girded *with true righteousness,* for *truth* is not added as if it were different from *righteousness,* but in order to point out the nature of that *righteousness* with which Christ is *girded.* Some think that *righteousness* here denotes that which Christ imparts to us, that it may dwell, not only in himself, but in his members. *Faith* or *truth* they understand to be that by which we embrace the salvation which he offers to us.

The Chaldee paraphrast explains it thus; "and the righteous shall be round about him, believing worshippers shall approach to him."[2] But I adopt a more simple interpretation, as if he had said, "He shall not appear like kings, clothed with purple and a crown, or girded with a *belt;* but *righteousness* and *truth* shall shine forth in him." I acknow-

[1] *The girdle.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "'The Targum of Jonathan renders it, *and the righteous shall be round about him;* that is, 'they shall cleave to him like a girdle.'"—*Jarchi.*

ledge, indeed, that *righteousness* is not confined to Christ, but belongs to his members; but we must attend to the mode of expression, that Christ comes forth to govern his people *girded with righteousness,* which he afterwards imparts to them by the secret influence of the Spirit. If we distinguish between the word אמונה (*ĕmūnāh*) and *righteousness,* I consider it to mean *faithfulness* or *steadfastness;* as if he had said that Christ never disappoints his followers, for he continues always to be like himself.

6. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.* He again returns to describe the character and habits of those who have submitted to Christ. As there is a mutual relation between the king and the people, he sometimes ascends from the body to the head, and sometimes descends from the head to the body; and we have already seen that Christ reigns, not for himself, but for those who believe in him. Hence it follows that he forms their minds by his heavenly Spirit. But the Prophet's discourse looks beyond this; for it amounts to a promise that there will be a blessed restoration of the world. He describes the order which was at the beginning, before man's apostasy produced the unhappy and melancholy change under which we groan. Whence comes the cruelty of brutes, which prompts the stronger to seize and rend and devour with dreadful violence the weaker animals? There would certainly have been no discord among the creatures of God, if they had remained in their first and original condition. When they exercise cruelty towards each other, and the weak need to be protected against the strong, it is an evidence of the disorder (ἀταξίας) which has sprung from the sinfulness of man. Christ having come, in order to reconcile the world to God by the removal of the curse, it is not without reason that the restoration of a perfect state is ascribed to him; as if the Prophets had said that that golden age will return in which perfect happiness existed, before the fall of man and the shock and ruin of the world which followed it. Thus, God speaks by Hosea: *I will make a covenant with the beast of the field, with the fowl of the heaven, and with the creeping things.* (Hos. ii. 18.) As if he had said, "When God shall have been reconciled to the world in Christ,

he will also give tokens of fatherly kindness, so that all the corruptions which have arisen from the sinfulness of man will cease."

In a word, under these figures the Prophets teach the same truth which Paul plainly affirms, that Christ came *to gather together* out of a state of disorder *those things which are in heaven and which are on earth.* (Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20.) It may be thus summed up: "Christ will come to drive away everything hurtful out of the world, and to restore to its former beauty the world which lay under the curse." For this reason, he says, that *straw* will be the food of *the lion* as well as of *the ox;* for if the stain of sin had not polluted the world, no animal would have been addicted to prey on blood, but the fruits of the earth would have sufficed for all, according to the method which God had appointed. (Gen. i. 30.)

Though Isaiah says that the wild and the tame beasts will live in harmony, that the blessing of God may be clearly and fully manifested, yet he chiefly means what I have said, that the people of Christ will have no disposition to do injury, no fierceness or cruelty. They were formerly like *lions* or *leopards,* but will now be like *sheep* or *lambs;* for they will have laid aside every cruel and brutish disposition. By these modes of expression he means nothing else than that those who formerly were like savage beasts will be mild and gentle; for he compares violent and ravenous men to *wolves* and *bears* which live on prey and plunder, and declares that they will be tame and gentle, so that they will be satisfied with ordinary food, and will abstain from doing any injury or harm. On this subject it is proper to argue from the less to the greater. "If Christ shall bring brute animals into a state of peace, much more will brotherly harmony exist among men, who will be governed by the same spirit of meekness." And yet Isaiah does not mean that any are mild and peaceful by nature before they are renewed, but yet he promises, that whatever may have been their natural disposition, they will lay aside or conquer their fierceness, and will be like *lambs* and *sheep.*

And a little child shall lead them. This means that beasts which formerly were cruel and untameable, will be ready to

yield cheerful obedience, so that there will be no need of violence to restrain their fierceness. Yet we must attend to the spiritual meaning which I noticed, that all who become Christ's followers will obey Christ, though they may formerly have been savage wild beasts, and will obey him in such a manner, that as soon as he lifts his finger, they will follow his footsteps, as it is said that *his people shall be willing.* (Ps. cx. 3.) Those who are not endued with this meekness do not deserve to be ranked among the sheep. Let us, therefore, permit ourselves to be ruled and governed by him, and let us willingly submit to those whom he has appointed over us, though they appear to be like *little children.* Besides, I think that the ministers of the word are compared to children, because they have no external power, and exercise no civil government over them.

A question arises, Do we find any persons who are meek, though they have not been tamed by the gospel? The Prophet appears to insinuate this, when he compares some men to *sheep*, and others to *wolves* and *bears;* and certainly among men who follow the bent of their natural disposition, we shall perceive an astonishing diversity. Some are mild and gentle, others are fierce and violent; but it is certain that all men are untamed till Christ subdues them by the gospel; all are swelled with ambition and pride before they are cured by this medicine. Many will be able to make a false and hollow profession of modesty and humility, but they will swell with inward pride. In short, where the Spirit of Christ is not, there will be no true meekness.

8. *And the child shall play on the hole of the asp.* He continues to illustrate the same sentiment, that when men have been brought into a state of favour with God, and have been cleansed from their depravity by the Spirit of regeneration, they will likewise be free from every hurtful disposition. There is no reason why men dread the danger or poison arising from the bite of serpents, but because they do not deserve that God should place every part of the world under their control. And, indeed, since animals are permitted to do injury even to *children*, this shows that the whole race of Adam has been stained with pollution from the very womb.

We must again observe the comparison which we stated,

that those men whom a concealed poison led to deeds of violence will have their disposition changed, and will do no harm even to *little children.* Some men are openly fierce and cruel, (Ps. cxl. 3,) and others inwardly carry and cherish their malice like poison, (Ps. lv. 21,) as David also describes them; for some men are more quick, and others are more slow, to manifest the desire of doing injury. Whatever they may have formerly been, he means that all of them must be cleansed from wickedness, both open and concealed, after having submitted to Christ. He means, also, that henceforth safety, which will reign everywhere, will be enjoyed even by those who have no kind of protection; so that they will freely venture to expose themselves to imminent dangers.

9. *They shall not hurt.* He now declares plainly, that men themselves, having laid aside the depravity which naturally dwells in them, will be inclined, of their own accord, to do what is right. He speaks of believers who have been truly regenerated *to a new life,* (Rom. vi. 4;) for though in the Church many hypocrites full of wickedness were mixed with the elect of God, yet they are like the Ishmaelites, whom God will cast out at the proper time. We ought also to observe, as we are taught in Psalm xv. 1, and Psalm xxiv. 3, that those only who follow *righteousness* have a settled residence in the temple of God, that they may dwell there for ever. It is, therefore, a distinguishing mark of the genuine members of the Church, that they are free from all desire of doing injury to others. Hence, also, we infer, that it is a remarkable gift of the Spirit of Christ, that men abstain from being evil-doers; for by nature, ambition, pride, cruelty, and avarice, always prompt them freely and voluntarily to commit acts of injustice.

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. With good reason does the Prophet add, that this invaluable blessing flows from *the knowledge of God;* for it abases all flesh, and teaches men to commit themselves to his trust and guardianship, and brings them into a state of brotherly harmony, when they learn that they have the same Father. (Mal. ii. 10.) Although many, who have not yet been renewed by the Spirit of Christ, profess to have humanity, yet it is

certain that self-love (φιλαυτίαν) reigns in them; for in all it is natural and so deeply-rooted, that they seek their own advantage and not that of others, think that they are born for themselves and not for others, and would wish to make the whole world subject to them, if they could, as Plato has judiciously observed. Hence arise fraud, perjury, theft, robbery, and innumerable crimes of this sort; and therefore there is no other remedy for subduing this lawless desire than *the knowledge of God.* We see how the Prophet again makes the government of Christ to rest on faith and the doctrine of the gospel, as indeed he does not gather us to himself (Eph. i. 10) in another way than by enlightening our minds to reveal the heavenly life, which is nothing else, as he himself declares, than *to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.* (John xvii. 3.)

As with waters that cover the sea. There is an implied comparison between the abundance of knowledge and that slender taste which God gave to the ancient people under the law. The Jews having been kept in the rudiments of childhood, (Gal. iii. 23, and iv. 3,) the perfect light of wisdom hath fully shone on us by the gospel, as was also foretold by Jeremiah: *They shall not every one teach his neighbour, and a man his brother, to know God; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* (Jer. xxxi. 34.) If this fulness of knowledge take possession of our minds, it will free us from all malice.

This passage also instructs us what is the character of the Church under Popery, where the light of doctrine is choked and almost extinguished, and the highest religion is made to consist in the benumbing influence of brutish stupidity. If we do not immediately possess full knowledge, we must advance from day to day, and make continual progress, (2 Pet. iii. 18,) and in such a manner that fruit may spring from that root. Hence it is evident how little progress the greater part have made in the school of Christ, seeing that fraud and robbery and acts of violence abound everywhere.

10. *And it shall be in that day the root of Jesse.* He again returns to the person of Christ, and repeats the same comparison which he had introduced at the beginning of the chapter, that of a *root* or a *branch* springing from a decayed

trunk, of which no trace appeared; and he foretells that the Gentiles, who formerly abhorred the Jews, will henceforth bow before their King with lowly homage. This might be thought to be altogether incredible, and unquestionably the promise was ridiculed for many centuries, because such a gathering together was to be expected rather when the kingdom remained and flourished than when it had been cut down. But it was necessary that it should be cut down, so that it might afterwards sprout again, and that the glory and power of God might shine in it more brightly than in its flourishing condition. Who would have seen with the eyes of men that the *branch* would rise to such a height as to be seen by all nations, and to direct the eyes of all men towards it?

Which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples. He compares it to a banner stretched aloft; and we know that this was fulfilled by the preaching of the gospel, and indeed was more illustrious than if Christ had soared above the clouds. To the same purpose is what he says, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up.* (John iii. 14; Numb. xxi. 9.)

Shall be sought by the Gentiles. Christ is said to be *sought*, when men flee to him for the purpose of asking salvation, as to *seek God* means, in every part of Scripture, to cast all our hopes upon him. Accordingly, the Greek translators have rendered it ἐλπιοῦσι, *they shall hope*, looking rather at the meaning than at the word.

And his rest shall be glory. These words are commonly explained as referring to the burial of Christ, and that by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole; for afterwards they apply it also to his death; and indeed the burial of Christ was nothing else than an appendage to his death. They think that the meaning is this, "The death of Christ, which was disgraceful in the eyes of the world, will be *glorious* and splendid." But when I take a closer view of the whole, by *rest* the Prophet means in this passage the Church; as it is also said, *This is my everlasting rest; here will I dwell.* (Ps. cxxxii. 14.) He bestows an honourable appellation on the assembly of the godly, because he chooses

to have a continual habitation among them. Accordingly, the Church having been at that time exposed to reproaches and disgrace, he promises that it will be again raised to a more prosperous condition, and will recover its ancient *glory.* Here, therefore, we have a remarkable proof that God is pleased to dwell continually in his Church, though this may not always be seen by men.

11. *And it shall be in that day, the* LORD *will again set his hand.* The prediction about the future glory of the Church having been incredible, he explains the method of restoring it, namely, that God will display the power of *his hand,* as if for performing a memorable and uncommon exploit. Now, to confirm the hope of the elect people, he recalls to their minds the remembrance of a past deliverance, that they may not doubt that God is as able to deliver them now as their fathers found him to be in Egypt. (Exod. xii. 51.) Such is the import of the word שֵׁנִית, (*shēnīth,*) that is, *the second time,* or *again;* as if he had said, "*Now also* will God be the deliverer of his Church."

To possess the remnant of his people. He confirms what he has said by another argument; for though it appeared as if God had disregarded his people, yet he will not allow himself to be deprived of his inheritance. We may sum it up by saying, that God will take care of the salvation of his Church, so as not to be robbed of his right. He expressly calls them a *remnant,* because this deliverance belonged only to a small seed. (Is. i. 9, and x. 22.) In short, he repeats what he formerly said, "Though God disperse and scatter his Church, yet it is impossible that he can ever cast it away altogether; for it is as dear to him as our inheritance is to any of us."

Which shall be left from Assyria and from Egypt. He speaks not only of the *Assyrians,* who had led the people captive, but also of other nations among whom the Jews were scattered; for though the greater part of the people was carried to Babylon, some fled into *Egypt,* some into Ethiopia, and some into other countries. They were afraid lest they should endure the same bondage as had been endured by others. Some think that by *Pathros* is meant *Parthia,* which is highly probable; others think that it is

Arabia the Rocky. Under the name *Elam* he includes the Medes, Zocdians, Bactrians, and other eastern nations. *Shinar* belongs to Chaldea. By *Hamath* they mean Cilicia, and the other countries which lie towards Mount Taurus. By the word *islands* the Jews mean all countries that lie beyond the sea; for to them Greece, and Italy, and Spain, were islands, because they were separated from them by the sea.[1]

We see that the Prophet speaks here not only of the deliverance which took place under Zerubbabel, (Ezra ii. 2,) but that he looks beyond this; for at that time the Israelites were not brought back from Egypt, Ethiopia, and other countries. These words, therefore, cannot be understood to relate to the deliverance from Babylon, but must be viewed as referring to the kingdom of Christ, under whom this deliverance was obtained through the preaching of the gospel. Besides, it is proper to observe that this work belongs to God, and not to men; for he says, *The Lord shall stretch out his arm;* thus ascribing to his heavenly power this work, which could not have been accomplished by human ability.

It ought also to be observed, that from God's past benefits we ought always to entertain good hopes for the future; so that whenever we call to remembrance the deliverances from Babylon and from *Egypt*, (Ezra ii. 2; Exod. xii. 51,) we may be convinced that God is equally able, and will equally assist us at the present day, that he may restore the Church to her ancient glory. What he did once and again, he is able to do a third time, and a fourth, and many times. When the Prophet calls those whom he rescues *a remnant*, let us learn that we ought not to desire a vast multitude, and let us be satisfied, though we be few, and let us not be terrified by the smallness of our numbers; for, provided that the righteousness of God abound, we have true and abundant ground of confidence.

12. *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations.* This verse contains nothing more than the explanation of the former verse. The language is metaphorical, and admits of two meanings; either that, *by giving an ensign*, he will terrify adversaries, so that they will not dare to prevent his people

[1] "Not *islands* merely, but all distant regions are comprised in the meaning of this word אִי, (*iyē.*)"—*Rosenmüller.*

from returning, or that he will *give an ensign* to the wretched exiles not to hesitate to make preparations for their return. But even at the present day this doctrine is highly useful among us; for as an *ensign* is lifted up in the army, that the soldiers may assemble, and that every one may follow and may keep his proper place, so a *banner* is here held out to us, that we may assemble to it, namely, the gospel, which the Lord has lifted up among the Gentiles, by which Christ is preached to us.[1]

And will gather together the dispersions of Judah. Hence we ought to conclude, that we cannot be *gathered* by the Lord unless we assemble to this *ensign*, and be joined to him by faith; for there is no other way in which he acknowledges us to be *his sheep*, than when, after having been *scattered*, we are *gathered together*, and meet in the same assembly under this *ensign;* as he says, *My sheep hear my voice and follow me.* (John x. 27.) The word *gather* is repeated. *He will gather together the outcasts of Israel, and will gather together the dispersions of Judah.* He shows how efficacious God's calling will be; for as soon as he shall give the slightest indication that such is his pleasure, he will restore the people. *Dispersion* is a collective noun, for it means the Jews *scattered* in all directions; and he appears to allude, as he often does elsewhere, to similar passages in the writings of Moses, in which the Lord promises that he will gather the people, though they were scattered to the farthest parts of the world, and to the four winds of heaven. (Deut. xxx. 3, 4.) Now, this was done under the direction of Christ. Under the same leader we ought at the present day to expect the restoration of a wretched and *scattered* Church; for there is no hope of *gathering the remnant* but by the elect looking to this *ensign.* We ought frequently, therefore, to call to remembrance those promises, that by relying on them we may more and more strengthen our hearts.

13. *And the envy of Ephraim shall depart.* Here he pro-

[1] "Set up his standard on an eminence, the signal for the soldiery to assemble round their commander. Cæsar terms it *vexillum proponere, quod erat insigne, cum ad arma concurri oporteret.* B. Gall. See Ammian. Hist., xxvii. 10."—*Rosenmüller.*

mises that the Church will be in such a state of peace, that neither will the Israelites and the Jews contend in civil broils, nor will they suffer any annoyance from their enemies, and that they will not be liable to hatred or *envy*, as they formerly were. Not that there will be no wicked men, but the Lord will at length cut off and destroy them. But we ought chiefly to observe what he adds about allaying domestic quarrels, that henceforth the children of Abraham may not harass each other, but unite in the same religion, and in the pure worship of God; for it was a disgraceful and shocking spectacle that their mutual strife and hostilities had been so long maintained.

With good reason does he point out the source of quarrels, namely, *envy*, in consequence of which the descendants of Abraham have torn each other, while the tribes of *Judah* and *Ephraim* strive with each other for renown. This horrible torch has always kindled wars in the world, while every man is unwilling to yield. In short, the Lord here promises outward and inward peace, which is a very great and most desirable blessing.

It will be objected that this was never accomplished, and that the very opposite of this took place; for as soon as the gospel began, it was followed by various wars, commotions, and dreadful persecutions, and nearly the whole world was disturbed and shaken. And inwardly what peace did the Church enjoy? Among Christians themselves, Satan, by his *tares*, (Matt. xiii. 25,) has raised up dreadful disturbances, so that no enemies were more ferocious and destructive than those which were brought up in the bosom of the Church.

I reply, the Prophet here includes the whole of Christ's kingdom, and not merely a single age or century. In this world we taste but the beginning of Christ's kingdom; and while the Church is harassed by enemies both within and without, still the Lord defends and preserves her, and conquers all her enemies. Besides, this prediction properly belongs to the true and lawful children of Abraham, whom the Lord has purified by the cross and by banishment, and has constrained to lay aside ambition and *envy;* as those who have been tamed in the school of Christ cease to be de-

sirous of renown. Thus the promise which Isaiah makes in this passage has already been in part fulfilled, and is fulfilled every day. But we must proceed in these exercises, and must fight earnestly within and without, till we obtain that everlasting peace which it will be our happiness to enjoy in the kingdom of God.

14. *And they shall fly on the shoulders of the Philistines.* He means that there is also another way in which the Lord will assist his people; which is, that he will conquer their enemies, and subdue them under his dominion. Having spoken of the safety of the Church, he now declares that she will be victorious over her enemies. He mentions those nations with which the Jews incessantly carried on wars; for on the one hand the *Philistines*, and on the other the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, to whom they were bound by the tie of relationship and kindred, were continually molesting and attacking them. On one side also were the *Edomites*, who were not restrained by blood-relationship from being most determined enemies; for they were descended from Esau, (Gen. xxv. 25, 26, and xxxvi. 1, 8, 9,) the brother of Jacob; and the remembrance of this ought to have dissuaded them from enmity and hatred. The Lord, therefore, promises that the Church, though she is not absolutely without enemies, will gain advantage over them by suffering, and in the end be victorious.

Edom and Moab shall be *the stretching out of the hands.*[1] *The stretching out of the hands* means the dominion which the Church obtained over her enemies; for by the word *hand* is usually meant power; and the Hebrews use the phrase, *to stretch out the hand*, instead of "to place this or that under subjection." Thus it is said, *I will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.* (Ps. lxxxix. 25.) *The stretching out of the hand*, therefore, is full power to rule; and, on the other hand, he adds the *obedience* which the enemies will yield to her: *and the children of Ammon* shall be *their obedience.*[2]

[1] *They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab.* (Heb. *Edom and Moab* shall be *the laying on of their hand.*)—Eng. Ver.

[2] *And the children of Ammon shall obey them.* (Heb. *the children of Ammon their obedience.*)—Eng. Ver.

The Jews, who dream of an earthly kingdom of Christ, interpret all this in a carnal sense, and apply it to I know not what external power; but they ought rather to judge of it according to the nature of Christ's kingdom. Partly, no doubt, the accomplishment of this prediction was seen, when the Jews returned from captivity, and God brought them into moderate prosperity, contrary to the wish, and in spite of the opposition, of all the neighbouring nations; but believers were led to expect a more splendid victory, which they at length obtained through the preaching of the gospel. Although we must continually fight under the cross, yet we vanquish our enemies, when we are rescued from the tyranny of the devil and of wicked men, and are restored to liberty by Christ, that the flesh may be subdued, and our lusts laid low, and that thus we may live to him, and *in patience may possess our souls*, (Luke xxi. 19,) calmly and patiently enduring everything that happens. And thus we even *heap coals on the head* (Rom. xii. 20) of enemies, to whose attacks and reproaches we appear to be subject.

15. *And the Lord will utterly destroy.* In this verse he means nothing else than that the Lord, by his amazing power, will open for his people a way, which formerly appeared to be shut up. He speaks figuratively. What he calls a *tongue* is "a bay of the sea;" for when the sea penetrates into the land, and occupies a part of it, there is a resemblance to a person putting out his *tongue*. He therefore means *the Egyptian sea* and *Egypt* itself, as he afterwards more fully explains. But he chiefly mentions *the sea* and the *rivers*, because they protect the countries and shut up every entrance.

And will stretch out the hand over the river in the strength of his wind. He undoubtedly means the Nile, which waters the whole of Egypt, and divides it into many parts, and might thus interrupt the march of the people when returning to their native country. I have no doubt that רוח (*rūăch*) here denotes *wind*, though he adds *the Lord's;* for all the *winds* are *the Lord's*, because he regulates and guides according to his pleasure; and more especially this phrase is employed when it is miraculously agitated by a violent

whirlwind. He alludes to the former deliverance of his people, by which he brought them out of *Egypt;* for when the Lord was pleased to open up a way for them, he dried up the sea by the force and violence of *the winds.* (Exod. xiv. 21.)

True, the Lord did not need the assistance of *the winds,* for he might have done it by an immediate exertion of his power. But when he makes use of outward means, let us learn, first, that all creatures are ready to yield obedience to him; for though they have a natural course, yet they are in his power, so that he can direct their force and violence in whatever way he pleases. For instance, when a wind arises, its beginning proceeds from a natural cause, and each of the winds has its properties. The south wind is moist, and the north wind is cold, and completely similar are the effects which proceed from them; for the south wind moistens bodies, and the north wind dries them. By extraordinary miracles the Lord shows that he possesses an authority far above these natural causes, so that they are governed, not by nature, (that is, by that succession of events or chain of causes which irreligious men imagine to exist,) but by God alone.

Secondly, he shows that he changes the nature and order of events whenever he pleases, that he may be acknowledged to be their only Lord; because such a change exhibits more clearly his authority and dominion. On this account Isaiah called it not simply *the wind,* but *the wind of the Lord,* that we may perceive that it is not directed or moved by chance, but by the power *of the Lord.*

And shall smite it in the seven streams. Some render it *torrents,* and explain it thus: "he will divide the Nile into *seven* parts." Though this exposition has been universally adopted, yet I do not approve of it; and I think that it has arisen from forgetfulness, rather than from ignorance, on the part of its authors, who are learned men notwithstanding, and deeply skilled in the perusal of the ancient writers. It is well known from history that the Nile had *seven* mouths. There are others which are little mentioned, because they had no names, and are therefore called false mouths. What-

ever, then, is the number of the mouths or branches, it appears to form that number of *streams* or rivers ; and these might have been so many hinderances to retard their journey. The Prophet expressly mentions them, because the river was highly celebrated.

And shall make them be shod with shoes.[1] The river being deep, he says that he will dry it up, so that it will not be necessary to pull off their *shoes* in crossing it, though this would have been necessary if only a small portion of water had remained.

By these metaphors, therefore, the Prophet means nothing else than that nothing will stand in God's way, when it shall be his pleasure to rescue his people from captivity. He glances at the history of a former deliverance, that they may learn that it will be the same with that which they formerly enjoyed. On this account he wished to place it, as it were, before their eyes ; for the means of this deliverance was not seen. If this promise had been stated in plain terms, it might not have produced so deep an impression on their minds as by holding out this remarkable example.

16. *And there shall be a path.*[2] This verse contains nothing new, but explains the former verse. The people would perceive the same power of God in the deliverance from Babylon as they had perceived in the deliverance from Egypt. He had opened up a way through seas, (Exod. xiv. 29 ; Ps. lxxvii. 19,) through untrodden deserts, (Deut. viii. 2, and xxix. 5,) and through Jordan. (Josh. iii. 16, 17.) In like manner, Isaiah says, that by an unexpected and astonishing method he will again open up a way for his people to go out. Accordingly, what the Lord has once performed let us also expect for the future ; and for that purpose let us ponder the ancient histories. This ought also to direct our thoughts to the final deliverance of the Church, by which we shall all be delivered from all troubles and distresses ; so that, though what we are told about a resurrection and immortal life may appear to be incredible, and the means of accomplishing them are not seen by us, still the Lord will easily find a way.

[1] *And make* men *go over dry-shod.* (Heb. *in shoes.*)—Eng. Ver.
[2] *An highway.*—Eng. Ver.

CHAPTER XII.

1. And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2. Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.

3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth.

6. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

1. Et dices in die illo: Cantabo tibi Iehova, Tametsi iratus es mihi, aversus est furor tuus, et consolatus es me.

2. Ecce Deus salus mea: confidam, et non pavebo. Quoniam fortitudo mea et canticum Deus Iehova; factusque est (vel *erit*) mihi in salutem.

3. Haurietis aquas cum gaudio, de fontibus salvatoris (vel, *salutis*).

4. Et dicetis in die illa: Canite Iehovæ; invocate nomen ejus; celebrate in populis opera ejus; commemorate, quia nomen ejus exaltatum est.

5. Psallite Iehovæ, quoniam magnifica gessit; et hoc vulgatum est per totam terram.

6. Jubila et canta habitatrix Sion; quia magnus in medio tui Sanctus Israel.

1. *And thou shalt say in that day.* Isaiah now exhorts all the godly to thanksgiving. Yet the exhortation has also this object, that the promise may be more fully believed; for he seals it with that exhortation, that they may be convinced that it is certain, and may not think that they are deluded by unfounded hope, when a form of thanksgiving is now given, and, as it were, put into their mouth; and this would not have been the case, if there had not been just and solid grounds. At the same time, he points out the purpose which the Lord has in view in doing good in his Church. It is, that the remembrance of his name may be extolled; not that he needs our praise, but it is profitable to ourselves. We ought also to consider the honour which he bestows upon us, when he condescends to make use of our services for extolling and spreading the glory of his name, though we are altogether useless and of no value.

Thou shalt say. He addresses the whole people as if he

were addressing one man, because it was their duty to be so united as to be one. We also are taught by the same example that we ought to be united together, that there may be *one soul and one mouth*, (Rom. xv. 6,) if we desire to have our prayers and thanksgivings accepted by God.

Though thou wast angry with me. The leading thought of this song is, that God, though he was justly offended at his people, yet was satisfied with inflicting a moderate chastisement, and showed that he was willing to be pacified. The particle כִּי (*kī*) being sometimes expressive of a cause, some render it, *I will praise thee, O* LORD, *because, having been angry with me, still thou art immediately reconciled;* but as it sometimes signifies *though*,[1] I have adopted the rendering which I considered to agree best with this passage.

Believers, therefore, first acknowledge their guilt, and next ascribe it to the mercy of God that they have been freed from their distresses. The words being in the future tense, the following interpretation might also be adopted:—"The temporal chastisement will not prevent thee from having at length compassion on me, and from giving me ground of joy and comfort." Whichsoever of these views be taken, this sentiment ought to be carefully observed; for as soon as a conviction of God's anger seizes our minds, it prompts us to despair, and if it be not seasonably counteracted, it will speedily overwhelm us. Satan also tempts us by all methods, and employs every expedient to compel us to despair. We ought, therefore, to be fortified by this doctrine, that, though we feel the anger of the Lord, we may know that it is of short duration, (Ps. xxx. 5,) and that we shall be comforted as soon as he has chastened us.

When we have been relieved from distresses, let us call to remembrance that our punishment is ended, not because we have paid to the justice of God what we had deserved,

[1] Lowth remarks that the Hebrew phrase is exactly the same with what we find in Rom. vi. 17. *But thanks be to God that ye were the slaves of sin, but have obeyed from the heart;* that is, *that whereas*, or *though ye were the slaves of sin; yet ye have now obeyed from the heart the doctrine on the model of which ye were formed.* "*For thou wast angry.* That is, whereas thou wast angry, now hast thou forgiven and comforted me." —*Stock.*

but because through his fatherly love he spares our weakness. This confession belongs properly to the godly and elect; for though the chastisements of the godly and ungodly appear to be the same, yet the reasons of them are exceedingly different. The wrath of the Lord against the ungodly is perpetual, and the chastisements which are inflicted on them are forerunners of everlasting destruction: no alleviation or consolation is promised to them. But the godly feel that the wrath of God is of short duration, and encourage their hearts by hope and confidence; for they know that God will be gracious to them, since he has declared that he punishes their sins for no other reason than to train them to repentance, *that they may not perish along with the world.* (1 Cor. xi. 32.)

2. *Behold, God is my salvation.* Though it is proper to behold by faith the salvation of God in the midst of our afflictions, yet here Isaiah speaks of knowledge derived from experience; for he lays down a form of a joyful song, in which God shows by outward signs that he is pacified towards his Church. Such is also the import of the phrase הִנֵּה, (*hinnēh,*) *Behold;* for now the brightness of God's countenance, which had been hidden for a time, shines forth, so that they can point to it as with the finger. Since, therefore, our punishments fill us with dread, and it is impossible for our minds not to be overclouded by our sins, as if we had no interest in God's salvation, or as if it were withdrawn from us, the Prophet describes here a change of feeling, when God is reconciled to us. But this prediction relates chiefly to the coming of Christ, which first exhibited fully the salvation of God.

I will trust and not be afraid. He adds, that when we are fully convinced that salvation is laid up for us in God, this is a solid foundation of full confidence, and the best remedy for allaying fears. But for this we must have trembled, and been uneasy and distressed, and tortured by painful emotions. Hence, we conclude, that confidence proceeds from faith, as an effect from its cause. By faith we perceive that salvation is laid up for us in God, and a calm and peaceful state of mind arises from it; but when faith is wanting

there can be no peace of conscience. Let us therefore know that we have made good progress in faith, when we have been endued with such confidence as the Prophet describes.

Besides, this confidence ought to *have the chief place in our hearts,* (Col. iii. 15,) so as to banish all fear and dread; not that we are free from all distress and uneasiness, but that assurance will at length be victorious. Yet we must keep in mind what I said, that the Prophet here speaks of the cheerfulness which believers, who had formerly been almost overwhelmed under the load of temptations, obtain, when God is reconciled to them.

For the LORD JEHOVAH *is my strength.* He states more clearly and more expressly that believers will have good reason to sing, because they will have known by experience that they are *strong* in their God, as indeed redemption was an illustrious display of the power of God. Since Isaiah does not describe the benefit of a single day, but that which God had determined to carry forward till the coming of Christ, it follows that there are none who sincerely and heartily sing the praises of God, but those who, convinced of their weakness, seek to obtain strength from God alone in answer to prayer. Nor is he here called a part or an aid of our strength, but our complete *strength;* for we are strong, so far as he supplies us with strength.

And my song. The reason why he is called *The song of the godly* is, that he bestows on them so much kindness for the purpose of exciting them to perform the duty of thankfulness. Hence we conclude that the beginning of joy springs from the favour of God, and that the end of it is *the sacrifice of praise.* (Ps. l. 23; Hos. xiv. 2; Heb. xiii. 15.) Thus, the hearts of the godly ought to be trained to patience, that they may not cease to bless God; but in a state of joy and prosperity their mouth is opened, so that they loudly proclaim God's benefits. But since the ungodly freely indulge in despising God, and, having laid their consciences asleep, riot like brutes in drunken mirth, and never awake to praise God, Christ justly curses their joy. *Wo to you that laugh, for ye shall mourn; your joy shall be turned into grief, and your laughter into gnashing of teeth.* (Luke vi. 25.)

And he hath become my salvation.[1] If it be thought better to take this clause in the past tense, the meaning will be, that believers sing joyfully, *because God hath saved them.* But it will be most appropriate to take it in the future tense, *and he will become my salvation;* that is, God not only *hath been salvation* to his people, but will be so to the end; for believers ought not to confine their attention to the present benefit, but to extend their hope to the uninterrupted progress of his favour.

3. *You shall draw waters with joy.* In this verse he confirms what we have already noticed, that this chapter may be regarded as a seal to confirm the promise which he gave about the redemption of his people. As if he had said, "The salvation of God hath been set before you, as if it were a constant running *fountain,* from which you can *draw waters* in abundance." This is a very beautiful metaphor; for in this life nothing is more necessary than *water,* so that there is no kind of scarcity that gives us more uneasiness or more distress than a scarcity of *water.* Thus, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, he declares that everything necessary for supporting life flows to us from the undeserved goodness of God. And since we are empty and destitute of everything good, he appropriately compares the mercy of God to a *fountain,* which satisfies those who are thirsty and dry, refreshes those who are parched with heat, and revives those who are worn out with fatigue.

From the fountains of the Saviour.[2] This word is more appropriate to this passage than if he had said, "*from the fountains* of God;" for it yields more consolation when we know that he is the author of our salvation, and therefore the Prophet has skilfully adapted this term to the situation in which it is placed. Now, if this promise includes the whole of Christ's reign, we ought constantly to apply it to our use. Let us therefore know that the goodness of God is held out to us, that we may be satisfied with it; for we ought to be like *a dry and thirsty land,* as the Psalmist says, (Ps. cxliii. 6,) that we may desire the waters of the Lord. This

[1] *He also is become my salvation.*—Eng. Ver.
[2] In the margin he adds, "or, *of salvation.*"

goodness of God is wonderful and beyond what could have been believed, that he does not suffer us to burn with unsatisfied desire, but presents *a fountain* from which we may *draw* abundantly. That *fountain* is Christ, in whom all God's benefits are imparted to us; *for out of his fulness*, as John says, *we all draw.* (John i. 16.) It remains, therefore, that whenever we feel our want we go directly to him.

4. *And in that day shall ye say.* He now exhorts them not only to sing praise and give thanks to God individually, but to excite others to do the same. As he had formerly said, *Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up into the mountain of the Lord,* (Is. ii. 3,) that is, exciting each other by mutual exhortation to embrace the pure worship of God; so after having enjoined them individually to be thankful to God, he now also commands them mutually to excite each other to thanksgiving. He means that they ought to speak not to one, but to all, and not at one time only, but during their whole life.

Call upon his name.[1] He now gives a short description of the manner in which praise is properly rendered to God, when he enjoins us to *call upon him*, that we *may not glory in any other.* (Jer. ix. 23, 24.) Hence also, by taking a part for the whole, (συνεκδοχικῶς,) Scripture frequently describes the whole of worship under the designation of *calling upon God.* In this way we show that our confidence is placed in God; and this is also what he chiefly demands from us. In like manner, I think that here the Prophet connects *calling upon* God with praises, in order to include the whole of the worship of God.

Make known his works among the peoples.[2] He means that the work of this deliverance will be so excellent, that it ought to be proclaimed, not in one corner only, but throughout the whole world. He wished, indeed, that it should be first *made known* to the Jews, but that it should afterwards spread abroad to all men. This exhortation, by which the Jews testified their gratitude, might be regarded as a forerunner of the preaching of the gospel, which afterwards fol-

[1] *Call upon his name,* (or, *Proclaim his name.*)—Eng. Ver.
[2] *Declare his doings among the people.*—Eng. Ver.

lowed in the proper order. As the Jews proclaimed among the Medes and Persians, and other neighbouring nations, the favour which had been showed to them, so, when Christ was manifested, they ought to have been heralds to sound aloud the name of God through every country in the world. Hence it is evident what is the desire which ought to be cherished among all the godly. It is, that the goodness of God may be *made known* to all, that all may join in the same worship of God. We ought especially to be inflamed with this desire, after having been delivered from some alarming danger, and most of all after having been delivered from the tyranny of the devil and from everlasting death.

5. *Sing unto the* LORD. He continues his exhortation, showing what is the feeling from which this thanksgiving ought to proceed; for he shows that it is our duty to proclaim the goodness of God to every nation. While we exhort and encourage others, we must not at the same time sit down in indolence, but it is proper that we set an example before others; for nothing can be more absurd than to see lazy and slothful men who are exciting other men to praise God.

For he hath done glorious things. When he asserts that God *hath done gloriously,* he means that there is abundant ground for singing. The Lord does not wish that his praises should be proclaimed without any reason, but holds out a very rich and very abundant subject of praise, when he frees his people from very hard bondage. We have said that this song is not limited to a short period, but, on the contrary, extends to the whole of Christ's reign. This work therefore is truly glorious, that *God sent his Son* to reconcile us to himself, (John iii. 16, 17,) and to destroy the dominion of death and the devil. (Heb. ii. 14.) If, therefore, we consider the work of our deliverance as we ought to do, we shall have very abundant ground for praising God.

And this hath been made known through all the earth. When he says that this *hath been made known,* he glances at the calling of the Gentiles, and confirms what has been already stated, that the work is such as ought not to be concealed in a corner, but to be everywhere proclaimed.

6. *Shout and sing.* He again exhorts the godly to rejoice in the Lord, at the same time reminding them what is the nature of true joy, and on what it is founded. We have no other happiness than to have God dwelling *in the midst of us.* But for this, our life would be wretched and unhappy, though we should have abundance of other blessings and of every kind of riches. Now, if our heart be set on our *treasure,* (Matt. vi. 21,) this happiness will attract all our feelings.

The Holy One of Israel. He calls him *the Holy One,* in order to inform us what he intends to prove himself to be to us, while he dwells with us; that is, that not only his majesty may fill our minds with reverence towards him, for it would at the same time overwhelm us with terror; but that he may vouchsafe to make us the objects of his peculiar care, though separated from the rest of the world. He calls him *the Holy One,* from the effect produced; for, by gathering us to himself, (Eph. i. 10,) and saving us by his grace, he may be said to *sanctify* us to be his own property. Accordingly, if God is with us, the conviction of his presence will fill us with inconceivable joy. Hence it follows that, when he is absent, we continue to be exposed to grief and sadness.

By the words, *Shout and sing,* he means that when God magnifies his power *in the midst of us,* he gives us occasion for no ordinary joy. Again, by directly addressing *the inhabitants of Zion,* he intimates that all are not capable of so great a blessing, and at the same time indirectly exhorts them to maintain unity of faith, that, by being united to the Church, we may partake of this blessed joy.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

2. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

3. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, *even* them that rejoice in my highness.

1. Onus Babylonis, quod vidit Isaias, filius Amoz.

2. Super montem excelsum levate signum; attollite vocem ad eos; agitate manum, ut ingrediantur portas munificorum.

3. Ego præcepi sanctificatis meis; adeoque vocavi fortes meos ad iram meam, lætantes gloria mea.

4. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

5. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, *even* the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

6. Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

7. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

8. And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces *shall be as* flames.

9. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

10. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

11. And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

12. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

13. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

14. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

15. Every one that is found shall

4. Vox multitudinis in montibus instar populi multi. Vox sonitus regnorum, gentium congregatarum; Iehova exercituum recenset exercitum belli.

5. Venientes e terra longinqua, ab extremo cœlorum, Iehova et vasa furoris ejus, ad vastandam universam terram.

6. Ululate; quoniam propinquus est dies Iehovæ; quasi vastitas a robusto (*vel, a vastatore robusto*) veniet.

7. Propterea omnes manus dissolventur, et omne cor hominis liquefiet.

8. Et terrebuntur; angustiæ et dolores apprehendent; instar parturientis dolebunt; quisque ad proximum suum obstupescet; facies flammarum, facies eorum.

9. Ecce dies Iehovæ veniet sævus; et indignatio, et æstus iræ, ut redigat terram in solitudinem, et sceleratos ejus deleat ex ea.

10. Itaque stellæ cœlorum et sidera non expandent lumen suum; obtenebratus erit Sol in egressu suo, et Luna non emittet fulgorem suum.

11. Et visitabo super orbem malitiam, et super impios iniquitatem eorum; et cessare faciam arrogantiam superborum, et altitudinem tyrannorum dejiciam.

12. Pretiosiorem reddam mortalem auro puro, et hominem massa auri ex Ophir.

13. Propterea concutiam cœlos, et movebitur terra loco suo, in indignatione Iehovæ exercituum, et in die æstus iræ ejus.

14. Eritque quasi damula impulsa, et ovis quam nemo colligit; quisque ad populum suum respiciet, et quisque ad terram suam confugiet.

15. Quisque deprehensus fuerit

be thrust through; and every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by the sword.

16. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it.

18. *Their* bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

19. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

20. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there:

21. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

22. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces; and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

confodietur; et omnis aggregatus cadet in gladio.

16. Parvuli eorum allidentur coram ipsis, diripientur domus ipsorum, et uxores eorum violabuntur.

17. Ecce, ego contra vos suscito Medos, qui de argento non cogitabunt, nec aurum ipsum appetent.

18. Et arcubus pueros allident, fructus ventris non miserebuntur, nec parcet filiis oculus eorum.

19. Et erit Babel, decor regnorum et ornamentum splendoris Chaldæorum, instar subversionis Dei in Sodoma et Gomorrha.

20. Nunquam amplius sedebit, neque habitabit in generationem et generationem; neque figet illic tabernaculum Arabs, neque pastores illic accubare facient gregem.

21. Sed ibi cubabunt Ziim, et domus eorum implebunt Ohim; illic habitabunt filiæ Struthionis, et illic Satyri saltabunt.

22. Et clamabunt Iim in magnificis ædibus eorum, et dracones in palatiis voluptuosis; ac tempus quidem ejus prope est, neque protrahentur dies ejus.

1. *The burden of Babylon.* From this chapter down to the twenty-fourth, the Prophet foretells what dreadful and shocking calamities awaited the Gentiles and those countries which were best known to the Jews, either on account of their being contiguous to them, or on account of the transactions of commerce and alliances; and he does so not without weighty reasons. When various changes are taking place, some think that God sports with the affairs of men, and others, that everything is directed by the blind violence of fortune, as profane history sufficiently testifies; very few are aware that these things are appointed and regulated by the purpose of God. There is nothing of which it is more diffi-

cult to convince men than that the providence of God governs this world. Many indeed acknowledge it in words, but very few have it actually engraven on their heart. We tremble and shudder at the very smallest change, and we inquire into the causes, as if it depended on the decision of men. What then shall be done, when the whole world is thrown into commotion, and the face of affairs is so completely changed in various places, that it appears as if everything were going to ruin?

It was therefore highly useful that Isaiah and other prophets should discourse about calamities of this nature, that all might understand that those calamities did not take place but by the secret and wonderful purpose of God. If they had uttered no prediction on those subjects, such a disordered state of affairs might have shaken and disturbed the minds of the godly; but when they knew long beforehand that this would happen, they had in the event itself a mirror of the providence of God. When *Babylon* was taken, which they had previously learned from the mouth of the Prophet, their own experience taught them that the prediction had not been made in vain, or without solid grounds.

But there was also another reason why the Lord commanded that the destruction of *Babylon* and other nations should be foretold. These predictions were of no advantage to *Babylon* or the other nations, and these writings did not reach them; but by this consolation he intended to alleviate the grief of the godly, that they might not be discouraged, as if their condition were worse than that of the Gentiles; which they would have had good reason to conclude, if they had seen them unpunished escape the hand of God. If the monarchy of Babylon had remained unshaken, the Jews would not only have thought that it was in vain for them to worship God, and that his covenant which he had made with Abraham had not been fulfilled, since it fared better with strangers and wicked men than with the elect people; but a worse suspicion might have crept into their minds, that God showed favour to accursed robbers, who gave themselves up to deeds of dishonesty and violence, and despised all law both human and divine. Indeed, they might soon

have come to think that God did not care for his people, or could not assist them, or that everything was directed by the blind violence of fortune. Accordingly, that they might not faint or be thrown into despair, the Prophet meets them with the consoling influence of this prediction, showing that the *Babylonians* also will be punished.

Besides, the comparison taught them how severe was the punishment that awaited them, which they had knowingly and willingly brought upon themselves. For if God pronounces such dreadful threatenings against the unbelieving and irreligious Gentiles, who wandered in darkness, how much greater will be his rigour and severity against a rebellious people who have intentionally sinned against him! *The servant who knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, is justly beaten with many stripes.* (Luke xii. 47.) Thus when God threatened such dreadful punishment against the blind Gentiles, the Jews, who had been instructed in the law, might behold as in a mirror what they had deserved.

But the chief design which Isaiah had in view in these predictions was, to point out to the Jews how dear and valuable their salvation was in the sight of God, when they saw that he undertook their cause and revenged the injuries which had been done to them. He spoke first of the desolation and ruin that would befall the kingdom of Judah and of Israel, because *judgment must begin* at the house of God. (1 Pet. iv. 17.) God takes a peculiar care of his own people, and gives his chief attention to them. Whenever therefore we read these predictions, let us learn to apply them to our use. The Lord does not indeed, at the present day, foretell the precise nature of those events which shall befall kingdoms and nations; but yet the government of the world, which he undertook, is not abandoned by him. Whenever therefore we behold the destruction of cities, the calamities of nations, and the overturning of kingdoms, let us call those predictions to remembrance, that we may be humbled under God's chastisements, may learn to gather wisdom from the affliction of others, and may pray for an alleviation of our own grief.

The burden. As to the word *burden*, which frequently

occurs, I shall state briefly in what sense it ought to be understood. It was generally employed by the prophets of God, whenever they threatened any afflictive event, in order to inform the people that no afflictive event happened which the Lord himself did not lay as a burden on men's shoulders. The wickedness and obstinacy of the people having constrained the prophets to preach incessantly about God's chastisements, the consequence was, that as a matter of ordinary jesting they called all the prophecies by the name of *a burden;* as is evident from Jer. xxiii. 36, where the Lord kindles into fierce indignation, because they not only spoke of his word contemptuously, but also held it up to dislike. This word makes known to the godly, that the Lord appoints all calamities and afflictions, that every one may suffer the punishment of his own sin.

Which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw. He expressly states that what he is about to utter was revealed to him by a heavenly *vision,* that the weight which is thus given to it may render it victorious over all the judgments pronounced by the flesh. It was difficult to believe that a monarchy so flourishing, and so prodigiously rich, could be overturned in any way. Their eyes being dazzled by beholding such vast power, the Prophet draws away their attention from it to believe the heavenly revelation, that they may expect by faith the judgment of God which they could not comprehend by the unaided exercise of their own minds.

2. *Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain.* The word *mountain* contains a metaphor; for the discourse relates to *Babylon,* which, we know, was situated on a plain; but with a view to its extensive dominion, he has assigned to it an elevated situation, like a fortress set on high above all nations. But perhaps it will be thought better to take the word *mountain* as used indefinitely; as if he had said, "When a signal is given there will be a vast assemblage from very distant countries, because all men will be attracted towards it by the wide and extensive influence of the sight;" and, indeed, I consider this opinion to be more probable, but I chose to mention at first the opinion which had been commonly received. Yet it might be thought absurd that the

Prophet here enjoins the creatures to yield, as it were, obedience to him, if God had not fortified the Prophet by his instructions and authority. A private man here commands the Medes and Persians, assembles armies, orders *a banner to be lifted up*, and sounds the trumpet for battle.

This should therefore lead us to consider the majesty of God, in whose name he spoke, and likewise the power and efficacy which is always joined with the word. Such modes of expression are frequently found in the Prophets, that, by placing the events as it were before our eyes, he may enable us to see that God threatens nothing by his servants which he is not ready immediately to execute. Isaiah might indeed have threatened in plain and direct terms, "The Persians and Medes will come, and will burst through the gates of *Babylon*, notwithstanding the prodigious strength of its fortifications." But those exclamations are far more energetic, when he not only assumes the character of a herald and proclaims war, but, as if he exercised the highest authority, orders the Medes and Persians to assemble like hired soldiers. Not only does he show that they will be ready at the bidding of God, because they are moved by his secret influence; but, having been sent by God to announce the ruin of Babylon, he claims for his own voice the accomplishment of what appeared to be beyond belief. It amounts to this, "When God hath spoken about what shall happen, we ought to entertain no doubt concerning it." It deserves our notice also, that he describes the Persians and Medes, without mentioning their names; for that threatening is more emphatic, when he points them out, as it were, with the finger, as when we say, "This and that man." This contributes to the certainty of the prophecy, when he points out such distant events as if they were at hand.

Shake the hand, that they may enter within the gates of the nobles. When he says, *Shake the hand, and they shall enter* he means that the Persians and Medes shall no sooner begin to advance at the command of God than their road shall be plain and easy in spite of every obstruction. Though the Hebrews call Princes נדיבים, (*Nedibim,*) that is, *generous and bountiful*, on which is also founded that saying of Christ

εὐεργέται καλοῦνται, *they are called benefactors,* (Luke xxii. 25,) yet I think that the Prophet draws our attention to the splendour of power in which the Babylonians gloried. They were furnished above others with forces and warlike armaments, so that it appeared to be incredible that they could ever be vanquished. But the Prophet threatens that nothing shall hinder God from opening up a way and entrance to the enemies.

3. *I have commanded my sanctified ones.*[1] Here the Prophet introduces the Lord as speaking and issuing his commands. He calls the Medes and Persians *sanctified ones,* that is, those whom he has *prepared.* The verb קדשׁ (*kādăsh*) is used in various senses; for sometimes it refers to the spirit of regeneration, and this belongs peculiarly to the elect of God. But sometimes it means to *wish* or *prepare,* and that meaning is more appropriate to this passage. All who are created by the Lord are likewise *appointed* by him for a fixed purpose. He does not throw down men at random on the earth, to go wherever they please, but guides all by his secret purpose, and regulates and controls the violent passions of the reprobate, so as to drive them in whatever manner he thinks fit, and to check and restrain them according to his pleasure. He therefore calls them *sanctified ones,* "set apart and prepared to execute his will," though they had no such intention. Hence also we are taught to ascribe to the secret judgment of God all violent commotions, and this yields wonderful consolation; for whatever attempts may be made by wicked men, yet they will accomplish nothing but what the Lord has decreed.

I have also called my mighty ones. The phrase, *I have called,* conveys more than the phrase, *I have commanded,* which he had used in the former clause. It means that they will be roused to action, not only at the bidding of God, but by the very sound of his voice; as if I were to *call* a person to me, and he were immediately to follow. He threatens, therefore, that *Babylon* shall be destroyed by the Medes and

[1] "*My appointed ones.*" קדשׁ (*kādăsh*) is to select and set apart for a work, particularly for one of God's appointment. See Jer. xxii. 7, and Zeph. i. 7.—*Stock.*

Persians, in the same manner as if they obeyed the call of God; for though they were prompted to battle by their own ambition, pride, and cruelty, yet God directed them, without knowing it, to execute his judgment.

4. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains.* He adds a still more lively representation, (ὑποτύπωσιν,) that is, a description by which he places the event as it were before our eyes. The prophets are not satisfied with speaking, without also giving a bold picture of the events themselves. Words uttered plainly, and in the ordinary manner, do not strike us so powerfully or move our hearts so much as those figures which delineate a lively resemblance of the events. As if he had said, "Now, indeed, you hear a man speaking, but know that this voice will be so powerful that at the sound of it *nations* shall be roused, *peoples* shall make *a noise*, and in vast crowds shall shout and roar to bring destruction on the inhabitants of *Babylon*. This proclamation, therefore, will be as efficacious, even after that I am dead, as if you now saw what I foretell to you."

In this event, therefore, we see how great is the efficacy of the word, which all the creatures both in heaven and in earth obey. We ought to be more strongly confirmed in the belief of this doctrine, by perceiving that every one of the events which had been predicted many centuries before has taken place. For this reason he declares that *the* LORD *of hosts mustereth the host of the battle*, that the various nations are moved by God's direction, and that, although nothing was farther from their intention than to inflict the punishment which he had appointed, still they do nothing but according to his command, as if some earthly general were to draw up his forces.

5. *Coming from a distant country.* He repeats and confirms more fully what I stated a little before, that the operations of war do not spring up at random from the earth; for though everything disorderly is vomited out by the passions of men, yet God rules on high; and therefore Isaiah justly ascribes sovereignty to God. Next, he adds, that armed men are nothing else than *the weapons of his indignation.* He says that they will come *from a distant country,* to overturn

the monarchy of *Babylon,* because we are not afraid of dangers unless when they are close at hand. *Babylon* was so strongly fortified, and was surrounded by so many kingdoms and provinces which were subject to it, that it seemed as if there were no way by which an enemy could approach. In short, as if she had been situated in the clouds, she dreaded no danger.

From the end of heaven. There being no trouble all around that threatened them, he gives warning that the calamity will come from a distance. Though everything appears to be calm and peaceful, and though we are not at variance with our neighbours, God can bring enemies *from the end of heaven.* There is no reason, therefore, why we should promise to ourselves a lasting and prosperous condition, though we are not threatened with any immediate danger. If this prediction had reached the inhabitants of *Babylon,* they would undoubtedly have laughed at it as a fable. Even if we should suppose that they paid some respect to the Prophet, yet, having so strong a conviction of their safety, they would have despised those threatenings as idle and groundless. An example may be easily found. When we preach at the present day about the Turk, all think that it is a fable, because they think that he is still at a great distance from us. But we see how quickly he overtook those who were at a greater distance and more powerful. So great is the insensibility of men that they cannot be aroused, unless they are chastised and made to feel the blows. Let the inhabitants of Babylon, therefore, be a warning to us, to dread, before it is too late, the threatenings which the prophets utter, that the same thing may not happen to us as happens to those wicked men, who, relying on their prosperous condition, are so terrified when the hand of God attacks and strikes them, that they can no longer stand, but sink down bewildered.

To destroy the whole land. When he puts *the whole land* for *Babylon,* he looks to the extent of the kingdom; that they may not think that the great number of provinces, by which they were surrounded on all sides, could ward off the attacks of enemies. But at the same time he intimates that

it will be no slight calamity affecting a single spot, but will be like a deluge overwhelming a large portion of the world.

Jehovah and the vessels of his anger.[1] The Persians and Medes are called *vessels of anger* in a different sense from that in which Paul gives that appellation to all the reprobate; for, by contrasting *the vessels of wrath* with *the vessels of mercy,* (Rom. ix. 22, 23,) he shows that the undeserved goodness of God shines in the elect, but that the reprobate are monuments of severe judgment. But Isaiah means that the Medes and Persians may be regarded as darts in the hand of God, that by means of them he may execute his vengeance.

6. *Howl ye.* He continues the same argument, and bids the inhabitants of Babylon *howl.* Not that he directs instruction to them, as if he hoped that it would be of any advantage, but, in foretelling what shall be their condition, he emphatically employs this form of direct address.

For the day of the LORD *is at hand.* He calls it *the day of the* LORD, according to the usual custom of Scripture, because when the Lord delays his judgment, he appears to cease from the discharge of his office, like judges when they do not ascend the judgment-seat. This mode of expression deserves notice, for we would gladly subject God to our disposal, that he might immediately pass sentence against the wicked. But he has his own appointed time, and knows the seasons when it is proper both to punish the bad and to assist the good.

It shall come as destruction from the Strong One.[2] He threatens that the severity of judgment will be such that the inhabitants of *Babylon* will have good reason not only to *cry* but to *howl;* because God displays his power to waste and destroy them. שָׁדַד (*shādăd*) signifies to *lay waste* and *plunder.* From this verb is derived שַׁדַּי, (*Shaddai,*) one of the names of GOD, which some render *Almighty.* There is therefore an elegant allusion to the derivation of the word as if he had said, that the inhabitants of Babylon shall learn

[1] *The* LORD *and the weapons of his indignation.*—Eng. Ver.
[2] *From the Almighty.*—Eng. Ver.

by their own destruction how appropriately God is called שַׁדַּי, (*Shaddai,*) that is, *strong* and *powerful* to destroy.[1]

7. *Therefore all hands shall be weakened.* He shows that the power of the Lord to destroy the inhabitants of Babylon will be so great, that they shall have no means of withstanding his anger. Though they stood high in wealth and in power, yet their *hearts* would be so *faint,* and their *hands* so *weak,* that they would have neither disposition nor ability to resist. And thus he indirectly ridicules the cruelty which boiled in the hearts of the Babylonians; for it is in the power of God to soften *hearts,* and to crush, loosen, or enfeeble *hands* or *arms,* so that suddenly all their courage shall fall down, and all their strength shall vanish away. When the heart quakes, what will be the use of fortifications, or armies, or wealth, or bulwarks? What avails a well-stocked workshop without a workman? We see this every day exemplified in those to whom in other respects the Lord had communicated large resources. Hence we see how vain is that confidence which we place in outward resources; for they would be of no use to us, if the Lord should strike our hearts with any alarm.

8. *Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them.* The word צִירִים (*tzīrīm*) being ambiguous, the Greek translators render it *ambassadors.* But the comparison of *a woman that travaileth,* which is added immediately afterwards, sufficiently proves that it denotes *pangs;* for here, as if by a single word, he explains what he had previously said, that their *hearts* shall be *melted* and their *hands* shall be *weakened;* because, he says, they shall be struck with terror and dismay. Whence comes this terror? From God. This kind of terror, for which there was no apparent cause, the ancients called a *panic;*[2] for they gave the name *panes* to apparitions and objects of this sort, by which men were terrified, even

[1] "שד משדי (*shōd mishshaddai*). This title of God is here employed for the sake of the alliteration, *destruction from the destroyer,* from him who is all-powerful to destroy (שדד) (*shādăd*) as well as to save."—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] By a happy coincidence, the English word *panic* conveys exactly the meaning of the Latin adjective *Panicus,* which is here said to be derived from the name of the heathen God *Pan,* the god of the mountains, cattle, &c.—*Ed.*

when there was no outward object that ought to have excited the terror. It was not without reason that they did so; but still they erred through gross ignorance, because they did not understand that it proceeded from God.

As a woman that travaileth. So far as relates to the inhabitants of Babylon, there was, indeed, just ground of fear, when they saw that they were attacked by valiant and warlike nations; but yet the Prophet threatens that, though they were able to resist, still they would be like men who were half dead, because through the secret operation of God they fainted and fell down. To the same purpose is what he adds, *Every one shall be amazed at his neighbour;* as when men are agitated and stare around them in every direction; and not only so, but when no hope of safety is to be seen, they are like men who have lost their senses, and abandon themselves to indolence.

Faces of flames their faces.[1] This clause, in which he attributes to them *faces of flames,* expresses still more strongly the violence of the terror. Some think that it denotes *shame,* as if he had said in a single word, *They shall blush;* but this is too feeble. Isaiah intended to express something greater and more dreadful; for when we are in agony the *face* glows, and the pressure of grief makes us burn. And, indeed, it would be treating the matter too lightly, when the calamity was so severe, to interpret these words as denoting *shame;* for he describes a calamity so distressing, that, on account of its severity, *flames* burst forth from the countenance, which usually happens when men are agonized by intense grief.

The comparison of *a travailing woman* denotes not only the intensity of the grief, but likewise the suddenness with which it seized them. As the calamity would be severe and violent, so Isaiah threatens that it will be sudden, and not without good reason; for the inhabitants of Babylon, protected by such strong defences, would never have thought that it was possible for any annoyance to reach or distress them.

[1] *Their faces* shall be *as flames.* (Heb. *faces of the flames.*)—Eng. Ver. "*Faces of flames shall be their faces.*"—*Stock.*

9. *Behold the day of the* LORD *will come cruel.* He repeats what he had slightly noticed a little before, that though the inhabitants of Babylon are now at ease, and rely on their wealth, *the day of the* LORD is at hand, to terrify those who are at ease.

But a question might here be raised, Why is *the day of the* LORD called *cruel*, since nothing is more desirable than to have God present with us; for his presence alone makes us truly happy? I answer, we ought always to consider who they are that are addressed by the Prophet; for it is customary with the prophets to give various descriptions of God corresponding to the diversity of the hearers. In like manner, David also declares that God is *merciful to the merciful, and cruel and severe to the ungodly.* (Ps. xviii. 25, 26.) What could wicked men imagine to be in God but the utmost severity? And therefore the slightest mention of God fills them with terror.

The godly, on the other hand, whenever the name of God is mentioned, derive the greatest delight and joy from hearing it; so that nothing can be more highly gratifying. Thus, when the prophets address the godly, as soon as they have mentioned God, they speak of joy and gladness, because the godly will feel that he is gracious and merciful to them; but when they address the ungodly, they hold out the judgment of God, and speak of grief and mourning. As the godly are cheered by the presence of God, because by faith they behold his goodness; so the ungodly are terrified, because the testimony of their conscience reproves and convinces them that he comes as a severe Judge. Since even hypocrites pretend that they eagerly long for *the day of the* LORD, and boast that he will assist them, the prophets tear off from them this disguise, and show that to them *the day of the* LORD will be dreadful and alarming. (Amos v. 18, 20.)

Isaiah applies the usual description to this prophecy, in order to show more fully how much we ought to dread the wrath of God; for, being by nature slow, or rather stupid, we would not be powerfully affected if the Lord spoke in plain terms about his judgments. Since, therefore, an unadorned style would be too cold, he contrived new modes of

expression, that by means of them he might shake off our sluggishness. When he says, *and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it,* he means by *sinners* not all men without distinction, but the ungodly and wicked men who inhabited Babylon.

10. *For the stars of heaven.* In order to strike our minds with a stronger and more distressing fear of the judgment of God, the prophets are accustomed to add to their threatenings extravagant modes of speaking, which place the anger of God, as it were, before their eyes, and affect all our senses, as if all the elements were now arising to execute his vengeance. And yet the expressions, though unusually strong, do not go beyond the dreadful nature of what took place; for it is impossible to exhibit an image of the judgment of God so alarming that the reality shall not be felt to be more revolting and terrible.

The sun, and *the moon,* and *the stars* are mentioned, because they are striking proofs of God's fatherly kindness towards us. Hence also Christ shows that it is an eminent proof of the goodness of God that *he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* (Matt. v. 45.) Accordingly, when the *sun* and *moon* and *stars* shine in heaven, God may be said to cheer us by his bright and gracious countenance. Since therefore in the brightness of heaven God shows a cheerful and friendly countenance, as if he might be said to smile upon us, the darkness which the Prophet describes conveys the thought, that God, by hiding his face, cast the men with whom he was angry into the darkness of sorrow.

A similar description is given by the Prophet Joel. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, before it comes—the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.* (Joel ii. 31.) We have already said that this mode of expression is frequently employed by the prophets, in order to inform us that everything will tend to our destruction, when God is against us. Sometimes indeed God gives tokens of his anger by means of *the stars;* but that is out of the usual course of events, and the *darkness* which the Prophet now describes will not take place till the second coming of Christ. But we ought to be satisfied with knowing that all the creatures,

which by discharging their duties to us are proofs and instruments of God's fatherly kindness, not only cease to be useful to us, when God arises to judgment, but in some measure are armed for vengeance.

11. *And I will visit upon the world wickedness.* Here the Prophet does not speak of the whole *world;* but as Babylon was the seat of the most powerful of all monarchies, he gives to it on that account the name of *the world,* and he does so emphatically, (ἐμφατικῶς,) for Babylon was a kind of *world,* because it appeared to occupy nearly the whole earth. And yet he means that there is nothing in this world so lofty that God cannot easily seize it with one of his fingers. At the same time he gives warning that God will punish the cruelty which was exercised by the Chaldeans. Yet we ought also to learn that the wickedness and crimes of Babylon are brought forward, in order to inform us that the Lord will not be cruel in punishing her so severely, because he inflicts the punishment which that people deserved on account of their transgressions and crimes. Every ground of calumny is therefore taken away, that we may not think that God delights in the afflictions of men; for when he thus deals with men according as they deserve, *the mouths of all must be stopped,* (Rom. iii. 19,) since the severity of the afflictions does not proceed from God, but finds its cause in men themselves.

And will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease. We must keep in mind what I have already noticed, that the Prophet yields no small consolation to the godly by assuring them that God, though he spares the inhabitants of Babylon for a time, will at length punish them for their injustice and cruelty. He expresses this still more clearly by taking notice of a particular vice, namely, *pride,* in consequence of which they loosed the reins, and gave unbounded freedom to their lawless desires to oppress the wretched. For this reason also he reproves their *tyranny.* But we ought also to draw from it a profitable doctrine, that it is impossible for us to escape punishment from the Lord, if we are puffed up with vain confidence and flatter ourselves. The Prophet here includes every kind of *pride;* whether men think that they are something, or admire their riches, and despise others in

comparison of themselves. God cannot endure any arrogancy, or suffer it to pass unpunished. Seeing therefore, that among a great variety of other crimes with which Babylon abounded, this was the greatest and most remarkable, it was chiefly by their pride that the wrath of God was kindled.

And will lay low the loftiness of tyrants. *Arrogance* was joined, as it usually is, to violence and cruelty; and therefore he adds *the loftiness of tyrants;* for when men despise others, this is followed by deeds of violence and injustice and oppression; and it is impossible for men to abstain from doing harm to others, if they do not lay aside all conceit and high estimation of themselves. Let us willingly, therefore, bring down our minds to true humility, if we do not wish to be cast down and laid low to our destruction.

12. *I will make a man more precious than pure gold.* Here he describes in a particular manner how cruel and savage will be the war that is carried on against Babylon. In like manner believers, instructed by these predictions, implore in the spirit of prophecy what is the utmost exertion of the cruelty exercised in wars, that the Persians and Medes may tear the infants from their mothers' breasts, *and dash them against the stones.* (Ps. cxxxvii. 9.) The general meaning is, that Babylon will not only be destroyed, but will be devoted to utter extermination; for when he says that the life of *a man shall be more precious than gold,* he asserts that the enemies will be so eager to shed blood, that it will be impossible to rescue a man out of their hands at any price, because they will choose rather to kill than to accept a ransom.

It may be asked, Was this destruction as cruel as Isaiah here describes it to be? For history gives a different account, and Daniel himself, who was an eye-witness of this destruction, relates that the city was only taken, for the Medes and Persians spared the citizens and inhabitants. This argument has constrained some commentators to apply allegorically to all the reprobate what is here related of Babylon; but in doing so they have overstrained the passage, for shortly afterwards (ver. 17) the Prophet names the Medes and Persians. Besides, those threatenings which will afterwards follow in

their proper order, against the Edomites, Moabites, the inhabitants of Tyre and of Egypt, and other nations, sufficiently show that the present discourse is directed literally against the Chaldeans, to whom the Prophet assigns the first rank; not that their destruction was as close at hand as that of other nations, but because none of the enemies of the Church were more dangerous.

It ought to be observed that Isaiah did not utter this prediction while the monarchy of Nineveh was still flourishing; but all that he predicted against heathen nations, during the whole course of his ministry, was collected into one book. Thus the order of events was not observed, but a similarity of subject was the reason why all these prophecies were put into one place. How comes it that Isaiah takes no notice of Nineveh, since he afterwards mentions that the Assyrians alone attacked the Jews, (for the Babylonians lived at peace with them,) but because he does not relate the history of his own time till the twenty-third chapter, but prophesies about the judgments of God which happened after his death?

Now, when he declares that Babylon will be utterly destroyed, it is certain that he does not merely describe a single calamity, but includes the destruction which followed long afterwards. After having been subdued by the Persians, Babylon continued to flourish, and held the name and rank of a very celebrated city. And although the city Ctesiphon was founded for the purpose of attracting a portion of its splendour and wealth, yet the convenience of its situation, the costly buildings, and the fortifications of the city, rendered it, with the exception of royal rank, not inferior to Persis. Even after the death of Alexander the Great, when Seleucia was built at no great distance, still it could not obliterate the name and reputation of the ancient city. Hence we conclude that those events which are here foretold cannot be limited to a single period.

It is not without reason, however, that the Prophet pronounces such fearful threatenings against them, since the revolution of the empire was the forerunner of the various calamities which followed afterwards. Though the people were not entirely slain, yet as the city was taken by storm,

and by a sudden assault at the hour of midnight, while the whole court was carousing in drunken revels, it was impossible but that the Medes and Persians must have slain all that came in their way. There can be no doubt, therefore, that there was a great slaughter before the conquerors extended their protection to the whole of the people as having surrendered at discretion. Who can doubt that this haughty nation was roughly handled by barbarian conquerors, for in no other way could it have been reduced to obedience?

Having been gradually weakened, not long afterwards, Babylon again changed its master, and, after having been governed for a short period by Alexander, king of Macedon, immediately passed under the dominion of Seleucus, who endeavoured by every method to degrade it till it was completely ruined. Thus, so long as God permitted the city to remain in existence, it presented a shameful and revolting spectacle to the whole world, that the accomplishment of the prophecy might be more evident and more impressive. Hence the Prophet Isaiah has good reason for asserting that the anger of God will not be appeased till that den of robbers be utterly destroyed.

A mortal and a man. So far as relates to the words, some translators render אנוש (*ĕnōsh*) a *warlike* or *eminent* man, and אדם (*ādām*) an *ordinary* man. But as the etymology does not correspond to this view, and as I do not think that it occurred to the Prophet's mind, I consider it to be rather a repetition of the same sentiment, such as we know to have been customary among the Hebrews. The word פז, (*pāz,*) which, in common with other translators, I have rendered *pure gold,* is supposed by some to mean *a pearl;* but from many passages of Scripture we conclude that it is *the purest and finest gold.*

13. *Therefore I will shake the heavens.* This is another figure of speech which contributes in a similar manner to heighten the picture. God cannot too earnestly urge this doctrine, not only to terrify the wicked, but to afford consolation to the godly, who are often distressed when it is well with the wicked, and when everything succeeds to their wish. David acknowledges that this happened to himself; for he

says, *Surely in vain have I purified my heart, and washed my hands in innocency.* (Ps. lxxiii. 13.) Properly, therefore, are these pictures set before our eyes, that they may plainly declare to us the destruction of the wicked. Thus it is as if Isaiah had said, "Though *heaven* and *earth* be *moved*, that the ungodly may be *shaken* and destroyed, nevertheless this will take place." They think that they are out of all danger, and that they have struck their roots so deep that they cannot be rooted out; but he shows that they are greatly deceived, for the Lord will *move both heaven and earth* rather than not cast them down headlong. Hence it follows that, though the world present to us a thousand supports both above and below, still there will be no permanency but through the favour of God. And if this is made known in judgments of God relating to particular cases, how much more in the universal judgment, when Christ will ascend his magnificent judgment-seat, to destroy the ungodly!

14. *And it shall be as the chased roe.* He shows that auxiliary troops will be of no avail to the Babylonians, and by these comparisons he describes the fear which shall seize the soldiers. Babylon employed not only her own soldiers, but likewise foreign and hired soldiers. He says that they will all be like *roes*, which are timorous creatures, and like scattered *sheep*, so that they will neither repair to their *standards* or their *post*, nor preserve any order.

Every one to his own land. Hence it is easily seen that the Prophet speaks, not only of the natives, or even of the strangers who had formerly dwelt there, but of foreigners who had been brought for the protection of the city. We have formerly said that the hearts of men are in the hand of God in such a manner that, according to his pleasure, either those who formerly were timid or cowardly persons suddenly acquire fresh courage, or those who formerly boasted loudly of being bold and daring lose their fierceness and become effeminate.

15. *Every one that is found shall be thrust through.* Here he confirms what he had formerly said, that none shall escape from Babylon, and that all who shall be there shall perish. Xenophon also relates that, by the command of Cyrus, they

slew every one that they met in the beginning of the night, and next day all that had not laid down their arms.[1] But we have already said that the prediction extends farther; for that slaughter was only the forerunner of others, for which Babylon was purposely preserved, that it might frequently be ruined.

And every one that is joined to them shall fall by the sword. Some translators render this clause differently from what I have done; because the Hebrew verb סָפָה (*sāphāh*) signifies to *destroy* or *consume*, they read it, *Whosoever shall be destroyed*, and explain it as relating to the old men, who were already worn out with age, and could not otherwise live longer; as if he had said, "Not even the men of advanced age, who are sinking into the grave, shall be spared, even though they are half-dead, and appear to be already giving up the ghost." But because that is a feeble interpretation, and the verb סָפָה (*sāphāh*) signifies likewise *to add*, I rather agree with Jonathan[2] and others, who think that it denotes *companies of soldiers*, as in taking a city the soldiers are collected together in the form of a wedge, to ward off the attacks of the enemy. But it will perhaps be thought better to understand by it the *confederates* or *allies* who were *joined* to Babylon, and might be said to be united in the same body, in order to show more fully the shocking nature of this calamity.

16. *Their children shall be dashed in pieces.* He draws a picture of extreme cruelty. It is the utmost pitch of ferocity exercised by an invading army, when no age is spared, and infants, whose age makes it impossible for them to defend themselves, are slain. He represents it as still more shocking, when he adds, "*in the sight of* their parents." To the same purpose is what follows about *plundering houses* and *ravishing wives;* for these things happen when the enemies have forgotten all humanity, and are inflamed to

[1] See Xen. Cyr., book vii., chap. v.

[2] Jarchi quotes the words, *to add the drunken to the thirsty*, (Deut. xxix. 19,) *add year to year*, (Is. xxix. 1,) and *add burnt-offerings to your sacrifices*, (Jer. vii. 21;) and his annotator Breithaupt translates the verb סָפָה (*sāphāh*) by a word in his native French, *accueillir*, which means to *gather*, or *flock together*.—*Ed.*

cruelty, and wish that those whom they have subdued, and even their very name, should be rooted out.

17. *Behold I raise up against them the Medes.* The Prophet, having predicted the destruction of the Babylonians, describes also the authors, or says that God will be the author; and at the same time he explains in what manner, and by means of whom, it will be accomplished; for he says that *he will raise up the Medes.* He certainly could not have conjectured this by human reason, for there were no jealousies and no quarrels between the Babylonians and the Medes; and if there had been any such, what power did the Medes at that time possess that they could do the Babylonians any harm? Seeing, therefore, that no preparations had been made for the Medes carrying on war against them, it is very certain that this was spoken by divine inspiration, and more especially since he foretold these events more than a hundred years before they took place.

Who shall not think of silver, nor desire gold.[1] When he says that they shall not be covetous of *silver and gold*, he does not mean that the Medes were not guilty of plundering and covetousness, as if they were so generous that they despised *gold and silver;* but, on the contrary, he means that the battle will be cruel and bloody, that they will aim at nothing but a general slaughter. For example, the Spaniards of the present day, making it their chief object in war to plunder, more readily spare the life of men, and are not so bloodthirsty as the Germans or the English, who think of nothing but slaying the enemy.

We ought not to think it strange that the Lord, though he is not cruel, yet makes use of agents who are so cruel, for he acts righteously even by the agency of wicked men, and is not stained with their wickedness. It would therefore be improper to form our judgment of the work of God from the executioners of it, for they are prompted either by ambition, or by covetousness, or by cruelty; but we ought to consider God's righteous punishment which the Babylonians deserved on account of their transgressions.

[1] *Which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.*—Eng. Ver.

18. *And with bows they shall dash in pieces the children.*[1] Some render it, *they shall cut.* They think that the language is exaggerated, as if they made use of the children of the Babylonians in place of *arrows,* and afterwards dashed them to the ground, that they might be broken with greater violence. But I choose rather to take a more simple view of the words, that the cruelty of the Medes will be so great, that they will not spare even infant children, on whom men do not commonly lay hands unless where there is the utmost barbarity; and, in short, that no allowance will be made for age, as we have formerly said.

But we do not read that the Medes exercised so great cruelty, and Babylon stood and flourished for a very long period after that calamity; and although the seat of the empire was removed from it, still it retained its name and reputation. Besides, after the dawn of the following day, no cruelty was exercised but against those who bore arms. Though it was the Prophet's design to include other judgments of God which awaited the Babylonians, and by which the first calamity was followed long afterwards, yet it is not improperly or unseasonably that he describes the barbarous manners of the nation, that the Jews may be more fully aware that a just reward is prepared for the tyranny of Babylon. Nor can it be doubted that it was in reliance on this promise that believers afterwards presented that prayer, *Blessed is he who shall dash thy little ones against the stones.* (Ps. cxxxvii. 9.)

19. *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms.* Here the Prophet intended to give a brief summary of his prophecy about the Babylonians, but enlarges it by some additions tending to show more fully that it will be completely destroyed. In this manner do the prophets speak of the punishment of the wicked, so as to leave no room for compassion by which they may relieve their minds. But the godly, though they may sometimes think that they are severely chastised, are yet supported by the confident hope that the Lord will have compassion on them, and will not altogether destroy them. Hence we may conclude that we ought not always to judge

[1] Their *bows also shall dash the young men to pieces.*—Eng. Ver.

from outward appearances; for we would often think that the children of God are ruined when their salvation is at hand even in the midst of death.

Of Sodom and Gomorrah. This example is frequently employed by the Prophets, in order to inform us that, though the mode of punishment be not the same, yet, since the judgment of God is impartial, that memorable display which he gave in *Sodom* (Gen. xix. 24) has a reference to all the reprobate, and that not less dreadful punishment awaits those who are hardened by similar obstinacy in their sins. They distinguish between the punishment of the elect people and the punishment of the wicked by this circumstance, that God reserves some *seed* for the Israelites, but none for the ungodly, which agrees with the words which we formerly met with, *Unless the* LORD *of hosts had left us a seed, we should have been like Sodom.* (Is. i. 9.) But he pursues the wicked with vengeance that cannot be appeased, and therefore he threatens against them the same destruction which was executed against the inhabitants of *Sodom*, that is, utter perdition without any hope of escape.

Shall be like God's overthrowing.[1] He says that it is *God's overthrowing*, that we may not think that it happens by chance, or that it has proceeded from the will of men. As it was not at random that the thunderbolt fell from heaven on *Sodom*, so it was not at random that *Babylon* fell down, but by the righteous vengeance *of God*, who, being always like himself, executed righteous judgment on them; and in like manner will execute the same judgment on all the reprobate till the end.

When *Babylon* is called *the glory of kingdoms and splendid brightness*, this is added for the sake of amplification, (πρὸς αὔξησιν,) in order to inform us, that no glory or splendour can hinder God from bringing the wicked to nought; for that overturn, having been incredible, afforded a more remarkable proof of Divine power.

20. *It shall never be inhabited any more.* By the verb תשב, (*thēshēb,*) *shall sit*, he means continuance; as if he had

[1] *Shall be as when God overthrew.* (Heb. *as the overthrowing.*)—Eng. Ver.

said, "There is no hope of restoring Babylon." All these forms of expression have precisely the same object, that the Babylonians will be destroyed with such a destruction that their ruin shall be perpetual. The picture is still further heightened by adding, that the desolation will be so great that *in that place neither will the Arabians pitch their tents, nor the shepherds their folds.* That place must have been marvellously forsaken and uncultivated, when it was disregarded by those roving tribes; for the *Arabians* were a wandering and unsettled nation, and had no fixed abode. Having left their native country, because it was barren, and is therefore called Arabia *Deserta,* (for it is of that country that we speak,) they devoted themselves to feeding flocks and to hunting, and wandered without any fixed residence; for which reason also the Greeks called them σκηνήται, (*skēnētai,*) *dwellers in tents.* Now the country around Babylon was exceedingly fertile before that calamity, which rendered this change the more astonishing and almost miraculous, either because the place lost its former fertility, or because the constant slaughter made all men abhor the sight of it. Undoubtedly the Prophet means that not only will the buildings be thrown down, but the very soil will be accursed.

21. *But the Ziim shall lie there.*[1] He continues the description of a desert place, and alludes to what he had formerly said, that Babylon will be destitute of inhabitants. In what way צִיִּים (*tziim*) ought to be translated I cannot easily say, on account of the diversity in the opinions of translators, who differ in this, as in various names of animals and herbs. The use of these things did not continue among them; and the Jews, who are themselves ignorant and unskilful, do not retain the knowledge of these things, though there are some of them who know nothing about either herbs or animals, and yet have the impudence to boast of being physicians. Of those who think that צִיִּים (*tziim*) is the name of a wild animal, some will have it to be a quadruped and others, a bird; but that is a matter of little importance For my own part, I have no doubt that the Prophet means

[1] *But wild beasts of the desert* (Heb. *Ziim*) *shall lie there.*—Eng. Ver.

either wild beasts which cannot be tamed, or birds which build their nests in distant forests.

It will not be amiss to explain what follows about *Satyrs* or *Pans*, who are called by the French, according to the various dialects of the provinces, sometimes *Luittons*, sometimes *Follets*, and sometimes *Loups-garouz*.[1] As Satan deludes men by various tricks, so he gives to them various names. It is certain that צִיִּים (*tziim*) is often used in Scripture for devils; and it is derived from צִיָּה, (*tzīyāh*,) which means *dryness*, or, *a desert*, as אִיִּים (*īyīm*) is derived from אִים, (*āyăm*,) which means *to terrify*. The Devil performs strange tricks by means of *Fauns* and *Satyrs*, and on that account their names are given to him.

The design of the Prophet is to show that the solitude will be so great, that not only will the place be deserted by men, but even the devils will there deceive by their tricks; for the devils avail themselves of the tendency of solitary places to produce terror. As enemies and robbers, by sallying forth from concealed lurking-places, frighten men the more, so devils take advantage of the night and the darkness, and of places distant from the view of men, that they may be able to excite greater terror in those who are naturally timorous.

22. *And Iim shall cry.*[2] He expresses the same thing as had been formerly said, and shows how dreadful that change will be, in order to make it manifest that it proceeds from the judgment of God, and not from chance. The picture is even heightened by adding that this will take place, not in ordinary buildings, but in *delightful palaces*.[3] While the shortness of time which is here laid down refers to the ap-

[1] It is a gratifying proof of the progress of knowledge and of the decay of superstition, that such words as *Hobgoblins*, *Hob-thrushes*, *Robin-good-fellows*, and even *Fairies*, answering to the grotesque names which CALVIN has brought from his own vernacular, have grown antiquated, and are not likely to be replaced by terms of modern date. Howell's definition of *Loup-garou* is a curious record of superstitious belief. "A mankind Wolfe, such a one as once being flesht on men, and children, will rather starve than feed on any thing else; also, one that, possessed with an extream and strange melancholy, beleeves he is turned Wolfe, and as a Wolfe behaves himselfe," &c.—*Ed.*

[2] *And the wild beasts of the islands* (Heb. *Iim*) *shall cry.*—Eng. Ver.

[3] *And hyœnas shall cry in their palaces, and jackals in their tabernacles of delight.*—*Stock.*

proaching calamity, it was at the same time necessary that the hope of believers should be held longer in suspense. I have said that Babylon was not so speedily overturned, and that the Medes did not inflict such a calamity upon it that it could be compared to a desert. He therefore said that it would quickly happen, because the beginnings of it were soon afterwards seen; for the Jews ought to have been satisfied with knowing that the punishment had not been threatened without good grounds.

And her time is near. The Holy Spirit also keeps in view our ardour and rashness. We would choose that God should immediately execute his judgments, and punish wicked men whenever we wish. But God knows what is the proper time, for which our eagerness does not allow us to wait. Yet if we would take into consideration his eternity, we should quickly find that by patience we laid the bridle on excessive haste; but as our eagerness can hardly be restrained in any other manner, God sometimes deals with us gently to some extent, by declaring that *He will soon come.* Again, let us not judge of the shortness of time according to our own views, but, disregarding the *days* of this life, let us raise our hearts to heaven. Especially let us learn to bow, whenever we are made to feel, even in a small degree, the judgments of God, though he delay their full accomplishment for a longer period.

And her days shall not be prolonged. This second clause is added for confirmation; as if he had said that the Lord hath appointed a day, and that none shall be admitted to obtain a truce.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

1. Jam miserebitur Iehova Iacob, et eliget adhuc Israelem, et faciet eos quiescere super terram suam; adjungeturque illis advena; sociabuntur, inquam, domui Iacob.

2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them

2. Et assument eos populi, inducentque eos in locum suum, possidebitque eos domus Israel in terra

in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3. And it shall come to pass, in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

4. That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

5. The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.

6. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth.

7. The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing.

8. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

9. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

Iehovæ, in servos et ancillas; et capient eos quorum fuerant captivi, imperabuntque oppressoribus suis.

3. Et erit in die quo tibi requiem dederit Iehova a labore tuo, et a tremore tuo, et a servitudine dura quæ imposita fuerat tibi:

4. Tunc sumes dictum hoc super Regem Babylonis, et dices: Quomodo cessavit exactor? Cessavit cupida auri?

5. Confregit Iehova baculum impiorum, sceptrum dominantium.

6. Quod percutiebat populos in ira plaga perpetua; dominabatur in iracundia Gentibus; si quis persequutionem patiebatur, non prohibuit.

7. Quievit, tranquilla est omnis terra, cecinerant laudem.

8. Etiam abietes lætatæ sunt super te, cedri Libani; ex quo quievisti non ascendit succisor contra nos.

9. Infernus subtus commotus est propter te, in occursum adventus tui excitavit tibi mortuos, et omnes duces terræ suscitavit de soliis suis, omnes Reges gentium.

10. Omnes loquentur, et dicent tibi: Tu quoque infirmitate affectus es sicut nos? et similis factus es nobis?

11. Deposita est in sepulchrum magnificentia tua, et strepitus musicorum instrumentorum tuorum; subter te stratus est vermis, et operiunt te vermiculi.

12. Quomodo cecidisti e cœlo Lucifer fili Auroræ? Quomodo in terram detractus es, sortem projiciens super Gentes (*vel, debilitans gentes*)?

13. Atqui tu dicebas in corde tuo, Ascendam in cœlum: in supernis juxta sidera Dei collocabo solium meum, et sedebo in monte testimonii, in lateribus Aquilonis.

14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

17. *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?

18. All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house:

19. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: the seed of evil doers shall never be renowned.

21. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

22. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

23. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

24. The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand;

25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

14. Ascendam super excelsa nubium, et ero similis Altissimo.

15. Tu verò in sepulchrum detractus es, ad latera foveæ.

16. Videntes te inclinabunt se, et attentè intuebuntur. Anne hic est vir ille tremefaciens terram, concutiens regna?

17. Posuit orbem quasi desertum, urbes ejus excidit, vinctis suis non aperuit domum.

18. Omnes Reges gentium, ipsi, inquam, omnes jacent cum gloria; quisque domi suæ.

19. Tu autem projectus es e sepulchro tuo, tanquam surculus detestandus, tanquam vestes interfectorum, qui gladio cæsi sunt, descendentes in foveam; ut cadaver proculcatum.

20. Non conjunges te cum eis in sepultura; quoniam terram tuam vastasti, populum tuum occidisti, non memorabitur perpetuò semen impiorum.

21. Præparate filiis ejus mactationem, in iniquitate patrum suorum; ne consurgant et possideant terram, atque impleant superficiem orbis urbibus.

22. Nam consurgam super eos dicit Iehova exercituum, et exterminabo e Babylone nomen et reliquias, filium et nepotem, dicit Iehova.

23. Et ponam eam in possessionem erinacei, et in stagna aquarum, et scopabo eam scopa evacuans, dicit Iehova exercituum.

24. Juravit Iehova exercituum, dicendo: Si non quemadmodum cogitavi, sic factum est; et quemadmodum consultavi, ita stabit;

25. Ut conteram Assur in terra mea, et in montibus meis conculcem eum; et recedat ab eis jugum illius, et onus illius ab humero ejus auferatur.

26. This *is* the purpose *that is* purposed upon the whole earth; and this *is* the hand *that is* stretched out upon all the nations.

27. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it?* and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

28. In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

29. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit *shall be* a fiery flying serpent.

30. And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety; and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

31. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, *art* dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none *shall be* alone in his appointed times.

32. What shall *one* then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

26. Hoc consilium quod consultatum est super totam terram; et hæc manus extenta super omnes gentes.

27. Quoniam Iehova exercituum decrevit, et quis dissolvet? Manus ejus extenta, et quis avertet eam?

28. Anno quo mortuus est Rex Achaz, fuit hoc onus.

29. Ne læteris universa tu Philistæa; quoniam confracta sit virga percutientis te. Nam de radice colubri nascetur regulus, et fructus ejus serpens ignitus.

30. Et pascentur primogeniti pauperum, et inopes securè accubabunt; et fame interire faciam radicem tuam, et reliquias tuas occidet.

31. Ulula porta, clama civitas, liquefacta es Palestina, universa tu. Quoniam ab Aquilone venit fumus; nec quisquam solus præfixo ejus die.

32. Quid autem respondebitur nuntiis gentis? Nempe quòd Iehova fundavit Sion, et in ea fiduciam habebunt pauperes populi ejus.

1. *For the* LORD *will have compassion on Jacob.* The particle כִּי (*kī*) having various significations, we might take it as signifying *But,* and might connect this verse with the former verse in the following manner: *But* (or, *yet*) *the* LORD *will have compassion on Jacob.* But I consider it to be better and more appropriate to view the particle כִּי (*kī*), in this as well as in many other passages, as used for assigning a reason; and thus the meaning will be, "God will destroy Babylon, *because he will have compassion on Israel,* whom he cannot despise or reject." Hence we see that the Prophet had hitherto endeavoured to soothe the grief of a wretched people, in order to inform them that they ought to entertain good hopes in the midst of their afflictions, of which *God would be the avenger.* (Ps. xciv. 1.) Here, therefore, as in a picture, Babylon is contrasted with the Church of God; Babylon, I say, elevated to the highest power, which had

plunged the Church into such a miserable and afflicted condition, that it was not probable that she could ever be raised up again. But the Lord casts down Babylon from her lofty situation, and thus testifies that he cares for his people, however mean and despicable they may be. It yields very great consolation to us to learn that the whole world is governed by God for our salvation. All things are directed to this object, that those whom he has elected may be saved, and may not be overwhelmed by any changes, however numerous, that shall befall them.

It will be asked, Was there a period during which God *had no compassion?* Undoubtedly, he always *had compassion;* but while the people were distressed by heavy calamities, it was not perceived; for, having their minds previously occupied with a view of God's anger, and, judging from outward appearances, they could not perceive *God's compassion.* Yet the Lord was always like himself, and never laid aside his nature. Thus it is proper to distinguish between the knowledge which springs from faith and the knowledge which springs from experience; for when the tokens of God's anger are visible all around, and when the judgment of the flesh leads us to believe that he is angry, his favour is concealed from us; but faith raises our hearts above this darkness, to behold God in heaven as reconciled towards us. What follows is somewhat more startling.

And will yet choose Israel, or, *will again choose Israel.* God's election is eternal. He does not *choose* us as if this had never before come into his mind; and as we were *chosen before the foundation of the world,* (Eph. i. 4,) so he never *repents of his choice.* (Rom. xi. 29.) But when the Lord chastises his people, this has the appearance of rejecting them; as we learn from the frequent complaints of the saints, LORD, *why hast thou cast us off?* (Ps. lxxiv. 1.) We look at God's rejection or election according to our weakness, and judge of his feelings toward us by the outward action. (I speak of the knowledge which is derived from experience, and which is corrected by the light of faith.) Accordingly, when the Lord calls us, that is, confirms his election, he is said to *choose* us; and when he gives evidence

that he is displeased, he is said to reject us. The meaning, therefore, is, "Though the Lord has treated his people so severely, as if he had rejected them; yet by the actual event he will at length show and prove that he has adopted them, by giving abundant evidence of his election, and by *having compassion on them* for ever."

We now may readily conclude what we have already said, namely, that the chastisements which the godly endure are widely different from that deadly stroke, however light it may be, which is inflicted on the ungodly. The godly are immediately led to consider their election, the confident belief of which cheers their hearts; but the ungodly see nothing but darkness, bottomless pits, and frightful desolation on all sides. Whenever, therefore, the Lord chastises us, we ought immediately to call to remembrance this distinction, that we may strengthen our hearts by the hope of a happier condition.

And shall cause them to rest in their own land. In their return he holds out an evidence of favour and reconciliation; for to the children of Abraham the *land* of Canaan was a pledge of their adoption.

And the stranger shall be joined to them. The Prophet foretells the calling of the Gentiles; as if he had said, "Not only will the Lord restore them to the possession of the land of Canaan, but will enlarge them by a great increase; for he will associate the Gentiles with them, that the two peoples may become one and the same body." This benefit, therefore, is not limited to a short period, but extends to the whole Church, which the Lord promises to place in safety; for he speaks, not of the Church in his own time, but of the Church which shall be till the kingdom of Christ, and during his kingdom; otherwise that addition would have been inappropriate.

2. *And the peoples shall take them.* He means that the foreign nations will be willing to become their companions, and in such a manner that they will not scruple to discharge the duties of servants. An instance of this was given, (Ezra i. 6,) when the people were brought back from Babylon; but that was only a slight foretaste of those things

which were accomplished by Christ, to whom all these statements must be referred. The Lord softened the hearts of the nations, who regarded that people with deadly hatred, so that by their guidance he brought them back to their native country, and bestowed on them their former liberty. But so far were many of the nations from assisting the Jews, after their return from Babylon, that all the neighbours earnestly entered into a league to distress them. (Ezra iv. 4.) They certainly attempted not only to banish them from the land of Canaan, but to drive them entirely out of the world. These things therefore were done in the kingdom of Christ, to whom *has been given all power, not only in earth, but also in heaven,* (Matt. xxviii. 18,) and by whom the Gentiles, who formerly had been strangers, were united to the Jews, so as not only to assist them in keeping their inheritance, but also to submit calmly and willingly to bear the yoke. It is with this view that he adds—

And the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD *for servants and handmaids.* The Jews being in some sort the *first-born* (Exod. iv. 22) in the house of God, we who are joined to them appear as if we had assembled under their roof; for they go before us, and hold the highest rank above all the nations, and undoubtedly would still hold it, if they did not by their ingratitude deprive themselves of these great privileges. And yet their ingratitude did not hinder the Lord from actually performing these things; for the Apostles, being Jews, subdued foreign nations by the word of God, and even those very nations *by whom they were formerly carried captive,* and to whom they had been tributaries, such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Persians, and finally, the Roman empire; so that all the nations might justly be called their inheritance, though they did not wish to rule over them, but to gain them to God, that they might acknowledge the same Lord and Prince as themselves. These statements must therefore be referred to the dominion and yoke of Christ, to whom the Jews subdued the Gentiles, not to a government of an outward nature, such as the Jews falsely imagine.

3. *And it shall be in that day.* He adds a confirmation of

the former promises. In this way the Lord provides for our weakness; for we find it difficult to render a full belief to his word, especially when the state of our affairs appears to contradict it. But by this method the Lord chooses to put our faith to the test, when he still promises the salvation of which all hope has been taken away.

From thy sorrow, and from thy trembling, and from thy hard bondage. He confirms what he has said by a variety of expressions, that, by removing all doubt, we may not cease to rely on his promises, even when our affairs are desperate. Yet by the same considerations he at the same time exhorts the Jews to gratitude, that they may never bury in forgetfulness a work of God so excellent and so worthy of remembrance. He expressly intended to mention the *yoke and bondage*, that the Jews might be fully aware that the Lord would take away these obstructions whenever he pleased, and that they could not at all prevent him from immediately delivering his people, when he thought fit. We ought also to apply this to our own use, in the present day, with reference to the wretched bondage and wicked yoke of Antichrist by which Christians are bound. Though they are confined and bound by snares and chains in every direction, they have God for their deliverer, who will quickly remove all difficulties and every kind of annoyances; and this ought to be extended to all sorrows, distresses, and afflictions.

4. *Then thou shalt take up this saying.*[1] By the term *witty saying*, or *parable*, (for the Hebrew word משל (*māshāl*) denotes "sayings that are weighty and remarkable, and worthy of being observed,") he shows that the ruin of Babylon will be so great that it will even become *a proverb*, which usually happens in great and astonishing events.

How hath the oppressor ceased? The word *How* throws it into the form of a question expressive of astonishment and ridicule. It might be thought incredible that Babylon, furnished with such abundant wealth and forces, should be overturned and fall into the hands of the enemy. Justly, therefore, does he ridicule their foolish and vain confidence,

[1] *That thou shalt take up this proverb*, (or, *taunting speech.*)—Eng. Ver.

that, being swelled with haughtiness, they thought that they were invincible, and were placed beyond the reach of all danger.

Yet it may be thought to be inconsistent with the modesty of godly persons to scoff at the misery of others, for they ought rather to have pitied them. But it is not inconsistent with compassion, when our zeal is regulated by the justice of the judgment of God; for in that case we may with human feelings compassionate those who perish through their folly, and at the same time laugh at their insolence and madness. As the Lord scoffs at them, laughing at their senselessness, so he bids us, through zeal for his glory, mock at them; not that we may be swelled with impudence, but that we may praise his goodness and power. By this example, therefore, we may scoff at the enemies of God, when they are vanquished or brought down, as we may scoff at Antichrist, whose power we daily see diminished and gradually falling into decay.

How hath the city covetous of gold ceased![1] The word מדהבה, (*madhēbah,*) in this clause, might be rendered *golden,* or *ornamented with gold;* but as it is connected with the word *Oppressor* or *Tyrant,* it probably denotes covetousness and insatiable greediness for *gold,* to which the Babylonians were subject. It is usually the case with great empires and states and wealthy nations, that the greater their abundance, the stronger is their greediness to possess more.[2]

5. *The* LORD *hath broken the staff of the wicked.* He answers the question which has just been put; for he did not intend that believers should doubt that it would happen, but rather that they should be amazed at such wonderful works of God; for the question had a tendency to arouse their minds to more earnest attention. It is as if he had said that it did not happen at random or through the blind violence of fortune that they have not been oppressed by continual bondage, but that it ought to be ascribed to the pro-

[1] *The golden city ceased!*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "מדהבה, (*madhēbah,*) being a Chaldee word, was probably the epithet by which that people distinguished their capital, as the Italians say, Florence the fair, Padua the learned, &c."—*Stock.*

vidence of God, who *hath broken* that hard yoke of bondage. Now, the ungodly are amazed at such works, and remain bewildered, because they do not see the reason; but the godly know that this ought to be ascribed to God. Let us therefore learn to admire the works of God, and while we are amazed at them, let us acknowledge him to be the Author; and let us not think that any of them ought to be lightly passed over, especially when he displays his power for redeeming his Church, when by his wonderful power he delivers each of us from the bondage of the devil, from the tyranny of Antichrist, from eternal death. It is no ordinary work, of which any part ought to be ascribed to the power of man or to any other cause.

To *the staff of the wicked* he adds *the sceptre of the rulers;* and by this repetition he means that no imperial power can support unjust tyranny. And immediately afterwards he states more clearly that the monarchy of the Babylonians would be destroyed, because it was unjust and tyrannical, when he says (verse 6) that the people had been struck with *an incurable stroke,*[1] and that there was no limit to the violence, because they had rioted with impunity in unbounded licentiousness. This reminds us that at length God will not spare tyrants, though he may wink at them for a time. The same destruction awaits them as, we learn, befell Babylon; for *the* LORD *is righteous,* (Ps. xi. 7,) and is always like himself.

7 and 8. *They break forth into singing.* Here he shows how greatly tyrants are hated by the whole world. When they are dead or ruined, all men break forth into joy, and express the feelings which they formerly entertained towards the tyrants, and which they dissembled through fear. Then do their hatred and spite burst forth, and not only do men make known their joy, but even the dumb creatures, as the Prophet, for the sake of amplification, adds *the fir-trees and the cedars.* As tyranny overturns everything, so when tyranny is done away, everything appears to be restored to its original condition.

[1] *With a continued stroke.* (Heb. *a stroke without removing.*)—Eng. Ver. *A stroke without intermission.—Stock. With a stroke unremitted. —Lowth.*

Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. To make the discourse more energetic, he adds a personification, in which he introduces the trees as speaking and congratulating themselves that, since the tyrant is dead, they will now stand gladly and at ease. The design of the Prophet is to show, that the Heavenly Judge cannot endure tyrants, who are abhorred by the whole world. Hence, we ought to conclude that, though under the sway of tyrants unhappy men are silent, and do not venture to open their mouths, yet the Lord listens to their secret groans. Let us not wonder therefore that tyrants come to such a dismal end; for God, who is a witness of the injuries which they have inflicted, must in the exercise of his justice assist the innocent.

9. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee.*[1] As he had formerly attributed gladness to the trees, so now, by a similar figure, he attributes speech to *the dead.*[2] He arouses them, as it were, from their *graves*, to mock at the pride of this tyrant. The whole passage is ironical, and full of keen sarcasm. At the approach of kings, the people tremble, and come forth to meet and receive them with pompous display. The Prophet makes a fictitious representation, that when this tyrant shall die and go down to *the grave*, *the dead* will go forth to meet and honour him, but with such honour as he deserves. As if he had said, "Not only the living, but also *the dead* will rejoice at his death. *The dead* also will treat him respectfully according to his deserts."

10. *All shall speak and say to thee.* These are taunts with which the dead jeer the tyrant who has joined them, as if they asked him what is the reason why he too is dead like other men. Struck with the singularity of the event, Isaiah pretends that they inquire with astonishment about it as something that could not be believed.

Art thou become like unto us? Tyrants are blinded by

[1] *Hell from beneath* (or, *the grave*) *is moved for thee.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] *The dead.*—Eng. Ver. *The mighty dead.*—*Stock.* "*Rephaim*, the gigantic spectres. Ghosts are commonly magnified by vulgar terror to a stature superior to the human."—*Rosenmüller.*

their greatness, and do not think that they are mortal, and even make themselves to be half-gods and adore themselves. On this account it is made known after their death that they shared in the condition of all mortals, to which they did not think that they were liable. It is in this sense that the dead, not without bitter scorn, reproach him for having *become like unto themselves;* for "death alone," as the poet says, "acknowledges how small are the dimensions of the bodies of men."[1] David also, speaking of princes and their high rank, says, *I have said, ye are gods; but you shall die like men, and fall like one of the common people.* (Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.) The bodies of princes, like those of the common people, must at length become corrupted and be devoured by worms, even though costly and splendid sepulchres be built for them.

11. *Thy pomp is laid down in the grave.* He mentions royal pomp, that this change may be more attentively considered by comparing the latter with the former; and he shows that that pomp could not prevent him from being reduced to the same level with other men. Under the term *musical instruments,* he includes all the luxuries and enjoyments in which kings are wont to indulge; because not only does the sweetness of music cause them to forget death, but the mad *sound* of them drives away all sadness, and in some respects stupifies the minds of men.

The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. In this second clause, the dead say jestingly, "Thou hast obtained a bed worthy of thee; for *the worms* serve thee for tapestry or a soft couch, and *the worm* serves for a splendid coverlet." In a word, there is here exhibited to us a lively painting of the foolish confidence of men, who, intoxicated with their present enjoyments and prosperity, flatter themselves. This doctrine ought to be carefully pondered; for though men be well aware of their condition, and have death before their eyes, yet overrun by ambition, and soothed by

[1] The allusion is obviously to a passage from Juvenal which the author, on a former occasion (*see page* 174), quoted at greater length. —*Ed.*

Mors sola fatetur,
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.
Juven. Sat. x. 172, 173.

pleasures, and even fascinated by empty show, they forget themselves.

12. *How art thou fallen from heaven!* Isaiah proceeds with the discourse which he had formerly begun as personating the dead, and concludes that the tyrant differs in no respect from other men, though his object was to lead men to believe that he was some god. He employs an elegant metaphor, by comparing him to *Lucifer*, and calls him *the Son of the Dawn*;[1] and that on account of his splendour and brightness with which he shone above others. The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to Satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention is paid to the context, we need not wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise. Yet it was an instance of very gross ignorance, to imagine that *Lucifer* was the king of devils, and that the Prophet gave him this name. But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables.

Casting the lot upon the nations, or *weakening the nations.*[2] Translators have mistaken the meaning of this clause, by rendering the participle חוֹלֵשׁ (*hōlēsh*) passively, *Thou art become weak*, for its signification is active. But as the verb from which it is derived signifies *to cast a lot*, and as the preposition עַל, (*gnăl,*) *upon*, is here added, it is best to take it in this meaning, that, as the ruler and disposer of all countries, he directed them by lot, or held them as his own possessions. And yet I do not reject the other meaning, that he *weakened the nations.*

13. *Yet thou saidst in thy heart.* These words must be connected with what goes before. *To say* means here, according to the custom of the Hebrew language, *to resolve in one's own mind.* The Prophet ridicules the pride of the Babylonian monarch, who, relying on his greatness, ventured to promise to himself uninterrupted success, as if he had the

[1] *Son of the morning.*—Eng. Ver.
[2] *Which didst weaken the nations.*—Eng. Ver.

power of determining the events of his life. In him there is exhibited to us a mirror of the madness of pride with which ungodly men are swelled, and which sometimes they even vomit out. Nor ought we only to behold here the person of a single tyrant, but the blasphemous rage of all the ungodly, who form their resolutions as if they could dispose of everything according to their pleasure; as their plans are also beautifully described by James, *We shall go into that city, we shall transact business, we shall make gain, though at the same time they know not what to-morrow shall bring.* (James iv. 13.) They do not consider that they are in the hands of God, but believe that they will do everything by their own ability.

I will ascend into heaven. In these words, and those which immediately follow, the boasting is so absurd that it is impossible to believe that they proceeded from the lips of a mortal man; but as the Prophet did not intend to quote the very words which Nebuchadnezzar employed, let us be satisfied with examining the subject itself. Undoubtedly, all who claim for themselves more than human nature will allow, may be said to "attack heaven itself after the manner of the giants," as the proverb runs.[1] Hence it follows that whatever they undertake will be destructive to them; more especially every one who goes beyond the limits of his calling provokes the wrath of God against himself by his rashness. Let every one therefore be satisfied with his lot, and learn not to aim at anything higher, but, on the contrary, to remain in his own rank in which God has placed him. If God stretch out his hand, and lift us up higher, we ought to go forward; but no one ought to take it on himself, or to strive for it from his own choice. And even those who are raised to a higher rank of honour ought to conduct themselves humbly and submissively, not with any pretended modesty, but with minds so thoroughly depressed that nothing can lift them up.

I will sit on the mountain of the testimony,[2] *on the sides*

[1] For the origin and application of this "proverb," see *Com. on the Gospel according to John*, vol. i. p. 223, n. 1.—*Ed.*

[2] *Upon the mountain of the congregation.*—Eng. Ver.

of the north. This plainly shows the reason why the Prophet especially accuses the Babylonian tyrant of so great madness, and what the Prophet means by such figures. He desired to *sit on the mountain of the testimony.* By this effrontery he attempted to make himself equal to God. Though he reasoned, after the manner of men, that he could obtain a victory over the Jews, yet, reckoning as nothing the assistance of God, by whom he had often heard that they were protected, it was as if he had endeavoured to destroy the very heavens. For Mount Zion he uses the expression *the sides of the north,* according to the description, *Mount Zion, on the sides of the north,*[1] *the city of the great King.* (Ps. xlviii. 2.)

He had formerly called it *the mountain of the testimony.* This word is derived from יעד, (*yāgnăd*), which signifies to *unite,* to *assemble,* and *to be agreed.* On this account מועד (*mōgnēd*) signifies both an *assembly* and an *appointed day;* and, in a word, it may relate to time, place, and persons. But here I prefer to view it as a *Covenant;* for the Lord, speaking by Moses, calls the Tabernacle מועד, (*mōgnēd,*) and says, *I will meet with you there.* (Exod. xxv. 21, 22, and xxix. 42.) Let us not think, therefore, that it means an assembly of men, as when irreligious persons assemble to their fairs or festivals, but that the Lord intended to give a token of his presence, and there to ratify his covenant. This ought to be carefully observed; for the blasphemy of the wicked king is proved by this, that he attacked heaven itself rather than an earthly place.

14. *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.*[2] It might certainly be thought strange that the Prophet thus accuses the Babylonian monarch, as if he wished to make himself equal to God, since, as we have said, this thought could scarcely enter into the mind of a man without making him absolutely shudder. As there is a seed of religion implanted in us by

[1] "In the outer court, that is, in the part which was chosen for *the north side;* as it is said, (Lev. i. 11,) *on the side of the altar northward.*"—*Jarchi.*

[2] "*I will ascend above the heights of the thick cloud.* My lofty rank does not permit me to dwell with men. I will make for me a small cloud in the air, and will dwell in it."—*Jarchi.*

nature, so we are constrained, even against our will, to entertain the belief of some superior being who excells all things; and no man is so mad as to wish to cast down God from his throne; for we are instructed by nature that we ought to worship and adore God. Hence also the Gentiles, though they were ignorant of God, rendered worship to their idols; and therefore it may be thought improbable that the king of Babylon wished to drive out God, and to reign in heaven.

And yet the Prophet does not accuse him falsely. Though the ungodly do not believe that they ought to reign instead of God, yet, when they exalt themselves more than is proper, they take away a portion of what belongs to him, and claim it for themselves, which is the same as if they wished to pull him down from his throne. And what did Satan say when he deceived our first parent? *Ye shall be as gods.* (Gen. iii. 5.) Consequently, all who dare to ascribe more to themselves than God allows are chargeable with exalting themselves against God, as if they declared war against him; for where pride is, contempt of God must be there.

We ought also to observe that argument which we lately noticed, that the tyrant, by assailing the Church, which was God's holy heritage, might be said intentionally to attack God. Since, therefore, he profaned the heavenly sanctuary, the language ought not to be thought exaggerated. Hence also we obtain a doctrine full of most valuable consolation, for we are taught that the ungodly exalt themselves against God whenever they attack his Church. He is not accused of exalting himself above angels, but of endeavouring to crush the Church of God. The worship of God is not now confined to one place, but is as extensive as the whole world. Whenever, therefore, men call on the name of God, if any tyrant rise up to oppress the godly, let us know that he attacks not men, but God himself, who at length will not endure to be insulted.

We shall afterwards meet with a similar example in Sennacherib, of whom Isaiah declares that, while he threatened and reproached Zion, he threatened and reproached God himself. Let us therefore know that we are under the pro-

tection of God in such a manner, that any one who gives us trouble will also have God for his enemy. *He that hurteth you,* says he, *hurteth the apple of mine eye.* (Zech. ii. 8.) He likewise testifies that he *dwells in the midst of* the Church, (Ps. xlvi. 5,) so that no one can attack the Church without receiving the first strokes; and therefore he will avenge the injuries which the Church endures, though he may permit her to be afflicted for a time.

15. *But thou shalt be brought down to the grave.* He formerly explained the intention of the king of Babylon, which was, that he should place his throne above the clouds; but he now contrasts with it an opposite event, namely, *the sides of the pit* or *ditch,* that is, some corner of a sepulchre into which he shall be thrown. He had formerly said that the king of Babylon wished to be carried up *to Mount Zion, to the sides of the north,* because that was a very lofty situation, and widely seen. He now uses the word *sides* in an opposite sense, as if he had said that he would have an abode in the most contemptible part of a sepulchre, as when one is thrust into a mean and despicable corner. In a wide and large sepulchre they place the dead bodies of honourable men in the middle; but the Prophet means that he will be thrown into a corner, or into the outer edges. Thus the Lord from on high laughs at the pride of the ungodly, so that, when they shall have swallowed up everything by their covetousness, and shall have burst through the clouds and heaven itself by their effrontery, he will at length expose them to the mockery of all, after having, in the twinkling of an eye, overturned their schemes.

16. *They that see thee.* The Prophet again, personating the dead, mocks at that wicked king. It might also be viewed as relating to the living; but it is better to apply the whole of this discourse to the dead, if we would not rather refer it to the grave itself, which amounts nearly to the same thing. We are wont to stretch out our neck when we meet with anything that is strange, or that deserves our attention. Thus, when it was thought to be a kind of prodigy that this king, who possessed so great power, had died, the Prophet says that the eyes of all men were directed towards him, to

look at him earnestly, as if they scarcely believed their own eyes.

Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that shook kingdoms? They first ask, if it be possible that he who, by the slightest expression of his will, *made the earth to tremble,* should be so quickly and easily laid low. Next, he mentions that this man was eager, but is unable, to destroy everything, and shows that tyrants, with all their cruelty, are like clouds, which pour down a sudden shower of rain or hail, as if they would destroy everything, but are scattered in a moment. This comparison was also employed by the good old Athanasius, when some one threatened him with the rage of the Emperor Julian. Isaiah shows that this change proceeds from the hand of God, who, by the slightest expression of his will, can overturn the whole world.

17. *He made the world as a wilderness.* He expresses the cruel and savage disposition of the tyrant, by saying that he *brought desolation on the world,* that he *overthrew cities,* that he *did not release prisoners.* It is sometimes the custom of conquerors to release prisoners, in order to win their hearts by kindness; but tyrants choose rather to be feared than to be loved. They think that the only way to reign is to strike terror into all by inexorable cruelty. There is no reason to wonder, therefore, that their end is so wretched and dismal; for it is impossible that the Lord should not, after having chastised his Church by their cruelty, give them like for like, and withhold all compassion from those who failed to exercise compassion to others. He therefore shows how wretched tyrants are, for they have God for their enemy, and are hated by men.

18. *All the kings of the nations.* He contrasts the king of Babylon with other kings, in order to show that, after his death, he will be more wretched than all the rest. And thus by comparison he gives a more enlarged view of the judgment of God, by which he would avenge the injuries done to his Church. This passage is the reason why I do not venture to limit, what Isaiah here foretells about the king of Babylon, to the person of Nebuchadnezzar alone; because it does not appear from history that he was denied

burial. The Jews, indeed, relate that Evil-merodach gave orders that he should be dug out of his grave, because the nobles of the kingdom would not venture to pay homage to him, unless there were evidence that his father was dead; but Jerome, though otherwise credulous enough, treats this as a fable.

He therefore describes, not a single man, but a whole dynasty; and, in like manner, when Scripture speaks of Antichrist, it includes the whole duration of his reign. Consequently, as if in the person of one man, the Prophet ridicules the pride of all those tyrants, and threatens what shall be their end, namely this, that they shall not have a spot of earth to bury them, though formerly they were ininsatiable whirlpools, and could not be satisfied with any possessions. They who have scarcely a foot of earth still retain their right to have a grave, which was also highly prized by the patriarchs; for it was reckoned disgraceful to be deprived of it.

19. *But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch.* He shows that the kings of Babylon will be loaded with such disgrace, that they will even be cast out of the sepulchre which they possessed by inheritance, and will exhibit a disgraceful spectacle. It may be asked, Is it of so great value in the sight of God to be buried with our fathers, that to be deprived of it should be reckoned a punishment and a curse? I answer, he does not here speak of the grave, as if it were necessary for salvation; but it ought justly to be reckoned disgraceful to be denied burial. And first, we ought to consider why burial has been so highly valued among all nations. This undoubtedly arose from the patriarchs, whose bodies the Lord commanded to be buried in the hope of the last resurrection. The carcases of beasts are cast out, because they are only fit for rotting; but ours are laid in the earth, that being kept there, they may await the last day, when they shall rise to enjoy a blessed and immortal life in union with the soul.

Various superstitions have arisen as to the interment of bodies. This has undoubtedly been occasioned by the craftiness of Satan, who usually corrupts and perverts everything

that is good and useful, for he devised innumerable contrivances by which he might dazzle the eyes of men. We need not wonder that the Jews had a great variety of ceremonies connected with this subject, and they cannot be blamed on account of it, for Christ had not yet been revealed, and consequently they had not so clear a revelation of the resurrection. But in our time the case is very different, for we plainly see the resurrection in Christ, and, every vail having now been removed, we behold clear promises which were more obscure to the Jews. If any one, therefore, were again to introduce and renew those ancient rites, he would undoubtedly darken the light, and, by putting a vail on Christ who has been revealed to us, would offer to him a high insult. Yet it is not useless to pay attention to burial, for it is the symbol of the last resurrection, which we still look for; but let there be no superstition and ostentatious display in funerals, which all godly persons ought to detest.

Now, if any one has been entirely deprived of burial, we must examine the cause. Many of the prophets, martyrs, and holy men have been deprived of it. We hear the Church bewailing that *the dead bodies of the servants of God have been thrown down to wild beasts and to the fowls of heaven, and that there is none to bury them,* (Ps. lxxix. 2, 3;) and every day we see the servants of Christ burned, or drowned, or hanged; and yet their death is glorious and blessed in the sight of God. As the cross of Christ was blessed, so crosses, chains, prisons, and deaths, which are endured by his members, share in the same blessing, and far exceed the prosperity and trappings and splendour and majesty of kings, so that, following the example of Paul, they boldly venture even to glory in them. (Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 5; Gal. vi. 14.)

But as to those whom the Lord permits to remain unburied, when we see nothing else than a token of his anger, we must fall back on this statement and others of the same kind. For example, Jeremiah threatened Jehoiakim with *the burial of an ass,* because he deserved to be ranked with beasts rather than with men, who, even after death, are distinguished from beasts by being buried. Thus it was proper that the king of Babylon, who had exalted himself above all

men, should be cast down below all men, so as even to be deprived of ordinary burial. Isaiah, therefore, foretells that he will not be buried *in his own house*, that is, in the sepulchre of his fathers, which came to him by inheritance; for we must not suppose that sepulchres were within houses.[1] The comparisons which are added express more strongly the disgrace which was due to that tyrant. As hurtful or useless trees are rooted out, so he shows that the king of Babylon does not deserve to have any place among men.

As the garments of those who are slain. They who fall in the field of battle are not buried in the ordinary way, but their bloody and stinking bodies are trodden down, and are thrown into a ditch along with their rotten *garments*, that they may not infect the air with their offensive smell; and no one deigns to touch the very *garments* defiled by mire and blood, lest he should be polluted by them. Which of the kings of Babylon it was that suffered this we cannot tell; but undoubtedly it was fulfilled.

20. *For thou hast laid thy land desolate.* This is the reason why he says that the king of Babylon did not deserve burial. He who has laid the *earth* desolate does not deserve that *the earth* shall receive him into its bosom and cover him. As *the earth* supports the living, so it covers the dead, and keeps them till the coming of Christ. It is therefore a just punishment of cruelty, when the *earth* refuses to receive into her bosom those who have dishonoured her. There is added a threatening still more severe, that the Lord will also inflict on posterity the remainder of the punishment.

The seed of the wicked shall not be continually remembered. There are two ways in which we may explain this clause, either that *the remembrance of the seed of the wicked* will not be of long duration, or that it will be altogether extinguished. The word לעולם[2] (*lĕgnōlăm*) may be translated in

[1] "It is curious that the Welsh language still preserves this meaning of the word *beth*, a *last home;* for it is the appropriate term in that language for *a grave.*"—*Stock.*

[2] עולם (*gnōlăm*) is derived from עלם, (*gnālăm,*) *to hide*, and is defined by the lexicographers to mean "an age, a time *hidden* from men, either unlimited and eternal or limited." Our author treats it as capable of meaning either *time past* or *time to come.*—*Ed.*

various ways, for it may refer either to the past or to the future. If we refer it to the past, the meaning will be, "Although *the seed of the wicked* be renowned, לְעוֹלָם, (*lĕgnōlăm,*) *for a time,* yet the remembrance of it will at length pass away." If we refer it to the future, the meaning will be, "God will extinguish the seed of the wicked, so that it shall never again be mentioned." It usually happens that the Lord curses *the seed of the wicked,* as, on the other hand, he blesses *the seed* of the godly, (Prov. x. 7;) and as *the righteous shall be held in perpetual remembrance,* (Ps. cxii. 6,) so *the remembrance of the wicked* must be destroyed and *cut off.* (Ps. xxxiv. 16.) Though we do not always behold these things with our eyes, yet there are abundant and clear proofs of the fact, by which it is fully confirmed.

But we must attend to the reason of this vengeance. The Lord punishes the pride of wicked men, who wish to spread their name, and to leave a perpetual remembrance of them; for all irreligious men have this for the object of their labours and exertions. On the other hand, the Lord blots out their name and remembrance, which appeared to be inscribed on lasting records; and the result is, that they are not only despised but even abhorred by all men. This happens to all tyrants, that though, while they live, they are universally applauded and flattered, yet after they are dead, they and their posterity are universally abhorred. It is therefore evident that they are detested by God, by angels, and by men.

21. *Prepare slaughter for his children.* Here Isaiah prophesies more plainly than before against the king of Babylon. He speaks of the whole of his descendants, to whom he intimates that this destruction extends. We must keep in mind what we formerly said, that hitherto the Prophet has spoken not of a single man, but of a whole dynasty; and now he removes all doubt as to the metaphorical language. The rendering given by the old translation, *Prepare his children for the slaughter,* does not agree well; for the preposition לְ, (*lamed,*) which is prefixed, evidently shows that it ought to be translated *to* or *for the children.*

We must see to whom this discourse relates. It must be

understood that reference is made, though not directly expressed, to some servants as officers or executioners, whom the Lord orders to be in a state of *preparation* for executing his judgments. And who were they? Partly the Medes and Persians, and partly others by whom Babylon was completely overthrown; for, as we have formerly said, Babylon was not entirely destroyed when the Persians subdued it. He therefore addresses those whom the Lord, by his eternal decree, had appointed to destroy Babylon. This mode of expression is more energetic than if he had merely said that *slaughter was prepared;* for he shows that he not only disposes of wicked men according to his pleasure, but that he has servants at hand to punish their sins.

For the iniquity of their fathers. When he says that in this manner *the iniquity of the fathers* is punished, it may at first sight appear to be excessively harsh to include the children along with the *fathers* in what relates to the infliction of punishment on them, and still more harsh, that the punishment due to the *fathers* should be extended even to their children and grandchildren. This inconsistency may easily be avoided if the word עון (*gnāvōn*) be translated *misery;* for it denotes the punishment of sin as well as sin itself. (Exod. xx. 5, and xxxiv. 7; Deut. v. 9; Jer. xxxii. 18.) But as it is frequently stated in Scripture, that God recompenses the sins of the parents into the bosom of the children, there is no necessity for evading it in this manner.

Nor is this inconsistent with what is said by Ezekiel, *The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.* (Ezek. xviii. 20.) God does not punish any innocent person; and this passage ought not to be understood as if the punishment due to ancestors were transferred by God to children who in other respects deserved no such punishment; for the guilt of the children is connected with the guilt of the fathers. Not to mention the universal curse of the human race, to which all are subject from the womb, let us take the example of some wicked man. When the Lord casts away that man and his posterity, we certainly have no right to remonstrate with him. If his blessing is free and undeserved, we have no right to constrain him, because he does not bestow it equally on

all. His grace is free; and each of us ought to reflect, that anything good which we have, does not naturally belong to us, but, on the contrary, comes from another quarter, and has proceeded from the undeserved goodness of God. If, therefore, he cast off any one, must not that man's seed also be accursed? When we are destitute of his grace, what remains but iniquity? And if they are liable to eternal death, much more to temporal punishments; for he who has been condemned to undergo capital punishment, deserves much more to endure imprisonment and scourging.

This ought to be carefully observed. I consider it to be a childish reply that is given by those who think that the Lord inflicts temporal punishments on the children of wicked men for the sins of their parents, and who do not look upon it as unworthy of God to inflict punishments of this nature even on innocent persons; for God never punishes those who do not deserve it, and he is by nature inclined to compassion; and how would he spare wicked men if he exercised his wrath against the innocent? We ought, therefore, to hold it as a settled point, that all who are destitute of the grace of God are involved in the sentence of eternal death. Hence it follows, that the children of the reprobate, whom the curse of God pursues, are liable to the same sentence. Isaiah, therefore, does not speak of innocent children, but of flagitious and unprincipled children, who perhaps even exceeded their parents in wickedness; in consequence of which they were justly associated with their parents, and subjected to the same punishment, seeing that they have followed the same manner of life.

It will be said, that in that case they suffer the punishment of their own sin and not of their parents. This, I acknowledge, is partly true; but it was with their parents that the rejection began, on account of which they also have been forsaken and rejected by God. Their own guilt is not set aside as if they had been innocent; but, having been involved in the same sins as to reprobation, they are also liable to the same punishments and miseries. I am aware that this solution does not satisfy those who never cease to quarrel with God; but I give myself little concern about them, provided

that I satisfy godly persons and those who are not fond of disputing; and these, I hope and trust, will be well satisfied with this reply, which is true.

That they may not fill the face of the world with cities. Some render it, *that they may not fill the face of the earth with enemies;* as if the Prophet meant that all wicked men are *enemies* of the human race, or rather of the whole earth; and, therefore, that the Lord provides for the safety of all, when he takes them out of the midst; for the earth would otherwise be choked by them as by thorns and briers. But this signification appears to express something more; for the earth receives us into her bosom, if we do our duty; and if we be despisers of God, the earth, even against her will, nourishes and supports us as enemies.

But I would rather follow another signification, which is more commonly received. I think that the Prophet intimates that wicked men have a numerous progeny, and that they surpass others both in numbers and in display, which we also see taking place every day, and which has originated the proverb, that "a bad reed grows quickly." The Prophet, therefore, insinuates, that wicked men would fill the whole earth not only with men, but also with towns, if the Lord did not beforehand perceive and guard against this evil, and diminish their number. When we everywhere see a vast multitude of wicked men, by whom the earth is almost overwhelmed, it is what we richly deserve; but the Lord never deals so harshly with us as not to leave some remnant of good seed, however small, and likewise to reserve some corners of the earth in which godly men shall have a little breathing. And if the Lord did not cut off a large proportion of wicked men, the earth would undoubtedly be soon overwhelmed by them.

This confirms what we have already said, that the children of the Babylonians who were slain were not innocent, for here the cause is assigned, *that they may not fill the earth with cities.* It follows, therefore, that they were wicked, and are taken away by a righteous judgment, that provision may be made for the salvation of men, and that the Lord cannot be accused of harshness and cruelty.

22. *For I will rise up against them.* The Lord now declares that he will do what he had formerly, by the Prophet, commanded others to do. Both statements ought to be observed, that it is the work of God, when wicked men are ruined, though he may employ the agency of men in executing his judgments. He formerly addressed them, saying, *Prepare.* (Ver. 21.) This should lead us to observe not only the power of God, but likewise the efficacy of prophecy, in consequence of which the prophets, by the appointment of God, command all nations to do this or that; and next, that men are so far from being able to hinder the accomplishment that they are even constrained to yield obedience to God. As we usually rely on men, and, by neglecting God, attribute to them the power of doing everything, we ought to hold by this principle, that since God acts by means of them, he is, strictly speaking, the Author of the work, and that they are only servants or instruments. This is clearly enough shown by the connexion of what immediately follows.

I have thought it best to view the particle ו (*vau*) as meaning *for.* He assigns the reason why he enjoins the Medes and others to *prepare* destruction to the Babylonians, *For I will rise up against them.* This mode of expression, by which the Lord says that he *riseth up,* is sufficiently common. By means of it, the Prophet accommodates himself to our capacity, for the majesty of God is so high that we cannot conceive of it. We think that God is idle and unoccupied, so long as he winks at men; and therefore he says that he *riseth up,* when he exerts his power, and manifests it by some visible act.

Saith the LORD *of hosts.* This title serves to confirm the statement; as if he had said that he did not, without good grounds, claim the government over the nations; for God governs all armies by his own hand. Since, therefore, he has been appointed to make known the purpose of God, it belongs to him to command men, that they may yield obedience to him. By the words *saith the* LORD, which he twice repeats in this verse, he affirms that he utters nothing but what has been commanded by God, that this prophecy may carry greater weight.

And I will cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, son and grandson. It has been often enough mentioned before, that this destruction did not overtake Babylon till after the death of Alexander the Great. By the phrase *sons and grandsons*, he means not only the posterity but the remembrance, which wicked men are so desirous to obtain, in order that they may be applauded for many ages after their death. This also the Lord took away from Babylon, that no remembrance of it might remain, but what was accompanied by dishonour and reproach.

23. *And I will make it to be a possession of the hedgehog.*[1] He again confirms the same things which he formerly predicted, namely, that henceforth it will not be a habitation of men, but will resemble a hideous cavern, in which wild beasts shall lurk. קִפֹּד (*kippōd*) is rendered by some *a beaver*, by some *a tortoise*, and by others *a hedgehog*. From the connexion of the passage, it is probable that the Prophet spoke of an animal that is found near the water; for he afterwards mentions *pools of water*. This applies strictly to the situation of the place, for though Babylon did not lie in a marsh, yet it lay in a moist place, the country around it being watered on one side by the Euphrates, and on the other by the Tigris. Hence the Lord threatens to bring a deluge upon it.[2]

24. *The* LORD *of hosts hath sworn.* For more full confirmation an oath was necessary. There is nothing of which it is more difficult to convince us than that wicked men will immediately be ruined, when we see them flourishing, and furnished with all means of defence, and seemingly placed out of danger, and free from all fear. We are therefore stunned by beholding them, and are dazzled by their brightness, so that we can scarcely believe God when he foretells their ruin and destruction. On this account he employs an oath, that he may leave no room for doubt. Hence we learn how great is his forbearance towards us, when he aids our

[1] *For the bittern.*—Eng. Ver. ὥστε κατοικεῖν ἐχίνους, *so that hedgehogs shall dwell in it.—Sept.*

[2] *And I will make it an inheritance for the porcupine.—Lowth.* "*The porcupine*, which grows to a great size in the islands at the mouth of the Euphrates, as Strabo remarks, b. 16."—*Rosenmüller.*

weakness by applying this remedy, for otherwise he might have been satisfied with simply declaring it. This tends to the consolation of the godly, as we shall afterwards see. (Is. xxii. 14.)

If it hath not been as I thought. The elliptical form of an oath which he employs must be well known, for it occurs frequently in Scripture. The Lord purposely used this guarded language, that we might not be too free in the use of oaths, which burst from us daringly and at random. He suppresses the greater part of the oath. "If I shall not do what I have decreed, let men think that I am a liar, and let them not think that I am God;" or something of this kind (which we shudder to express) is left to be supplied. Men ought, therefore, to lay a bridle on themselves, so as not to break out at random into imprecations, or to pronounce shocking curses against themselves; but let them learn from this to restrain their insolence.

25. *That I may bruise the Assyrian in my land.* Some think that this relates to Sennacherib's army, which the hand of God destroyed by means of an angel, when he besieged Jerusalem. (2 Kings xix. 35; Is. xxxvii. 36.) If this interpretation be preferred, the meaning will be, that the Lord will shortly give some evidence of that destruction which he has threatened against the Babylonians. Those who heard these predictions might have brought this objection: "Of what avail will it be to us that Babylon is destroyed, after Babylon has ruined us? Would it not have been better that both Babylon and we had remained uninjured? What consolation will be yielded to us by its destruction, when we, too, shall have been destroyed?" And, indeed, I have no doubt that he holds out a proof of God's favour in destroying their enemies, which either had been already manifested, or would be manifested soon afterwards.

I dare not affirm at what time this prediction was uttered by the Prophet, but it may be conjectured with some probability that the slaughter of Sennacherib's army by the angel had already taken place. In this way, from a striking event which they had known, the Prophet would lead them to expect a future redemption; as if he had said, "You

have already perceived how wonderfully God assists his people at the very hour of danger." I am thus prepared to assign a reason for thinking that Sennacherib's army had been already slain. Undoubtedly this instruction must have been of some use.

But Babylon did not begin to give any annoyance to the Jews before she had subdued the Assyrians and removed the monarchy. So long, therefore, as the Jews had nothing to do with Babylon, why did the Prophet speak of the judgment of God, by which he would avenge his people? There is no absurdity in supposing that the record of a past event is confounded with a prediction. And yet it will not be inadmissible to say that the *Assyrians* are here put for the *Chaldeans;* for though they had been deprived of the government, yet it is probable that they were always first in a state of readiness whenever there was an opportunity of attacking the Jews, and that, while they fought under foreign leaders, they formed the greater part of the army. Not only were they nearer than the Chaldeans, but those who at that time held the sway were aware that their inveterate hostility against the Jews would make them loyal and obedient in that war. Besides, it was advantageous to the conquerors to weaken the vanquished by continual wars, till they had been accustomed to bear the yoke.

Most appropriately, therefore, by a figure of speech in which a part is taken for the whole, Isaiah, though he is speaking of *Babylon,* describes the whole of its forces under the name of *Assyria.* There will thus be no argument which lays us under the necessity of explaining this passage as relating to the slaughter effected by the angel in Sennacherib's army. The Prophet merely affirms, so far as my judgment goes, that the Lord will put an end to the tyranny of the Assyrians, so that they shall not always enjoy their present superiority. As if he had said, "Though for a time God permits wicked men to rule over you, this power will not always last; for one day he will, as it were, *break the yoke,* and deliver this people from this bondage under which they groan." The Assyrians, though they were vanquished by the Chaldeans, did not on that account, as we have said,

cease to be enemies of the Church; but Babylon, which had succeeded in the room of Nineveh, began at that time, by a kind of transferred right, to carry on war with the Jews.

And his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden shall be taken from their shoulder. When he says that the Assyrian will be *broken* in Judea, this must not be understood as if they would be slain there, or that they would be instantly crushed by some calamity; but that the chosen people would be delivered from their tyranny, and that their authority would thus be taken away. The *breaking*, therefore, does not refer so much to persons as to the empire. What he says about the *yoke* and the *burden* would not apply strictly to the Assyrians alone, who at least never were masters of the city of Jerusalem; and therefore we must attend to the succession which I mentioned, for the Chaldeans had no right to carry on war except that right which they boasted of as having been conveyed to them by the Assyrians. Thus I think that I am justified in extending this prophecy to that deliverance by which the Lord showed that he would avenge his people against the Chaldeans and Assyrians; for at that time the *yoke* was shaken off by which the Jews were miserably held bound, and it even includes the redemption obtained through Christ, of which that deliverance was a forerunner.

And upon my mountains I will tread him under feet. Some think that the word *mountains* is put in the plural number for Mount Zion; but I prefer a different interpretation. Jerusalem being situated among the *mountains*, the whole country around was despised for that reason. The Prophet therefore speaks contemptuously, as if he admitted that the country was regarded by the enemies as of little value because it was mountainous. But this very contempt serves to magnify the power of God; for he shakes off from his *mountains* the dominion of this powerful monarchy. This refers to the narrative contained in 1 Kings xx. 23, 28.

26. *This purpose which is purposed upon the whole earth.* The Lord is not satisfied with one or two confirmations, and can scarcely refrain from proclaiming it more and more

abundantly, because he knows well that our minds are naturally prone to distrust. No confirmation suffices for us, even though his promises be frequent and copious and solemn. God therefore wishes to remedy this disease, and that is the design of the repetition, so that we must not think that it is superfluous. They who suppose that the Prophet, or rather the Spirit of God, uses too many words, are not well acquainted with themselves.

He declares, first, the will and purpose of God, and, secondly, his power. How comes it that we have any doubts about the word, but because we do not ascribe to God that power which belongs to him, or because we are not convinced of his power? These are the only two causes of our unbelief, with which, on the other hand, we ought to contrast the two things which Isaiah recommends to our notice, namely, the *purpose* and the *power* of God. We ought to believe, first, that God is *true*, for he declares nothing that is not fixed and unchangeable; and, secondly, that he is *powerful*, and that nothing can withstand his arm. Again, we must not inquire about the secret purpose of God: for the Prophet here enjoins us to rest satisfied with the decree which has been manifested in the word of God. We must not rise any higher, therefore, so as to penetrate into the secrets of God; but we ought to be satisfied with undoubted proofs which he declares by the mouth of the prophets. Let us therefore embrace all the promises of God with our whole heart, and let us also add to them his power; for his hand ought never to be separated from his mouth. We must not imagine his power to be, as philosophers talk, a power that is unemployed, but, as the Scriptures teach us, powerful and active.

A question may here arise, Why does he mention *the whole earth* and *all the nations*, when he is only speaking about Babylon? But we must keep in remembrance what we formerly said, that the Babylonian empire, after having swallowed up Nineveh, extended nearly through the whole of the east, and that various nations were subject to it. The consequence was, that the devastation of that empire was also the destruction of the whole world; for such great monarchies

cannot fall without involving many in an extensive ruin. Accordingly, as the extent of that empire might lead men to call in question this prophecy, Isaiah shows that, though it be spread far and wide, and includes a boundless multitude of nations, that does not prevent God from executing his decree.

27. *For the* LORD *of hosts hath decreed.* Isaiah here employs what may be regarded as a concluding exclamation, to confirm more fully the preceding statement. Having said that it is the purpose of the Lord, in order to show that it cannot be broken or made void, (Ps. xxxiii. 11,) he puts a question as if about a thing impossible, *Who shall disannul his purpose?* or, *who shall turn back his hand?* By this exclamation he speaks disdainfully of all the creatures; for as soon as the Lord has *decreed*, he *stretches out his hand*, and when *his hand is stretched out*, the execution of the work must undoubtedly follow. Nor is it only men whom he declares to be incapable, but he also declares everything else to be incapable of preventing the decree of God; at least if there be anything but man and Satan that opposes his will. In short, he intimates that there can be no repentance or change in God, (Num. xxiii. 19,) but that whatever may happen, even amidst an endless diversity of events, he continues always to be like himself, and that no occurrence can thwart his purpose.

If it be objected that God sometimes changed his purpose, as when he spared the Ninevites, (Jonah i. 2, and iii. 10,) Abimelech, (Gen. xx. 3, 17,) or Pharaoh, (Gen. xii. 17,) the answer is easy. When the Lord sent Jonah to the Ninevites, he did not reveal what had been decreed in his secret purpose, but wished to arouse their minds by the preaching of Jonah, that he might have compassion on them. The same thing might be said, when he threatened Abimelech and Pharaoh, because they wished to lay hands on Abraham's wife; for thus the Lord, by terrifying them, intended to keep them back, that they might not suffer the punishment of their obstinacy.

28. *In the year that King Ahaz died.* Here the fifteenth chapter ought to have begun, for the Prophet enters on a

new subject; and this plainly shows how absurdly the chapters are divided, or rather torn asunder. Having spoken of the Babylonians, he passes to the Philistines;[1] or, perhaps, before speaking of the Babylonians, he addressed the Philistines, who, being the near neighbours of the Jews, cherished deadly hostility against them. They were the remainder of those nations whom the Israelites spared, though the Lord had commanded that they should be removed out of the midst of them. (Num. xxxiii. 52; Deut. vii. 16.) Their unbelief in this matter was the reason why the Lord left these nations to be *thorns*, that they might *prick their eyes;* as the Scripture shows that the Lord had formerly threatened against them. (Num. xxxiii. 55.) In consequence of the deadly animosities which existed between these two nations, whenever the Jews sustained any defeat, the Philistines reckoned it to be so much gain to themselves; for they wished the ruin of the Jews, and no occurrence could give them greater delight than when the Jews were reduced to the deepest adversity and distress. The Prophet therefore prophesies against them as against the constant enemies of the Church.

It is proper to attend to the time when this vision was exhibited to the Prophet. So long as Ahaz lived, the Philistines were victorious. That wicked hypocrite, who had forsaken God, and eagerly sought the outward assistance of man, was punished for his treachery. During his reign the Philistines (2 Chron. xxviii. 18) recovered those towns which Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7) had taken out of their hands; but after his death, they became still more courageous, for they expected that they would then gain all that they desired, because he who had been left as his heir was still a child; for Hezekiah, the new king, had neither shrewdness, nor authority, nor wisdom. These circumstances, therefore, ought to be carefully observed; for Isaiah has not the Philistines so much in his view, though he speaks to them, as the

[1] The Hebrew word here used by Isaiah is פלשת, (*Phelesheth,*) from which was derived the word *Philistia,* afterwards changed to *Palestina.* An early genealogy informs us that the *Philistim,* or *Philistines,* were descendants of Mizraim, a son of Ham. (Gen. x. 14.)—*Ed.*

godly, whom he wishes to comfort and strengthen with good hope by this prophecy, who would otherwise have thought that the condition of Judea was entirely ruined, because they were attacked by enemies on all sides, and no assistance of any kind could be seen. To those persons, therefore, in their distressed and forlorn condition, Isaiah stretches out his hand, and bids them be of good courage, because the Lord would undoubtedly assist them.

This burden. He calls this prophecy a *burden*, because it would be disagreeable and painful to the Philistines, who thought that they had got rid of every annoyance, because the Jews were hard pressed, and had no hope of bettering their condition; and therefore he threatens that the destruction of the Philistines also is at hand.

29. *Rejoice not, thou whole Philistia.*[1] He begins by checking the vain and groundless confidence with which the *Philistines* were puffed up, and, by adding *Thou whole*, he intimates that all of them would feel a portion of this calamity; as if he had said that not only would that country be laid waste in some part, but that there would not be a corner of it exempted from the stroke, and that, in all its length and breadth, it would immediately and universally be visited with destruction.

Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken. Some think that by the *broken rod* is meant King Ahaz, but that view is unfounded; for in all his battles with the *Philistines* he was vanquished. (2 Chron. xxviii. 18.) It must therefore be referred to Uzziah, (2 Chron. xxvi. 6,) and yet I would not choose to limit it even to him, but would at the same time refer it to the whole body of the Jewish people. It is as if he had said to *Palestina*, "Thinkest thou that thou art safe, when the Jews, who formerly distressed thee, have been subdued? Thou art greatly deceived; for very soon shalt thou be more severely distressed." For this reason, as I have said, I do not limit it to any one person, but think that in the person of one man is described the whole body of the Jews.

For out of the adder's root shall spring a cockatrice, and

[1] *Palestina.*—Eng. Ver.

his fruit shall be *a fiery serpent.* He now assigns the reason why *Palestina ought not to rejoice;* namely, that the Jews would have more power than ever to do injury; that if the Philistines had formerly sustained damage from them, they would afterwards sustain greater and heavier damage. The metaphor which he employs is highly appropriate; for the *cockatrice* is more hurtful than the *adder,* and the *fiery serpent* is more hurtful than the *cockatrice.* Through the kindness of God we have no animals so destructive in the countries which we inhabit. But the Prophet means nothing else than that the power of doing them injury has been taken away from the Jews; and therefore I differ from others who view the name of the *adder* and of the *fiery serpent* as applying to Hezekiah only. Though that opinion derives great plausibility from the circumstance that Hezekiah held all that belonged to *the Philistines, as far as Gaza,* (2 Kings xviii. 8,) yet the Prophet intended that this promise should extend farther. Let us therefore know that the favour of which the Prophet now speaks, though it began with Hezekiah, belongs to the Jews as to one body.

We ought to draw from it a general statement, that when we are weighed down by adversity, and when the ungodly *rejoice* as if we were ruined, and as if they alone were prosperous, God declares that their *joy* is without foundation. The Church will always rise again, and be restored to her former and prosperous condition, though all conclude that she is ruined. The children of God shall acquire new vigour, that they may pierce the eyes of the ungodly; not that they wish this, or have any such intention, but because the decree of God makes it necessary that this shall take place.

The names of *cockatrice* and *fiery serpent* do not imply reproach. In their own nature the godly are not such, but they are so called, because they are hurtful to the wicked, though in themselves harmless; for it is through the fault and the malice of the wicked that what ought to have been useful and profitable is hurtful to them. Such is also the nature of God himself, (Ps. xviii. 26,) and of the gospel, (2 Cor. ii. 16.)

30. *And the first-born of the poor shall feed.* The Pro-

phet, as has been already said, has not so much in view the Philistines, to whom his threatenings were of no avail, as the Jews, whom he wished to comfort in their affliction; for they were so grievously afflicted that they were not far from despair. He therefore calls them *the first-born of the poor*, as being eminent for their wretchedness; for, being reduced to extremities, they held the first rank among the wretched. Now, he promises that the Lord will deliver them from such misery, and will again *feed* and nourish them. Hence we perceive that the Philistines were cut down and destroyed for the benefit of the people of God. In like manner, also, the Lord promised to Abraham and his posterity, *I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee;* for those who are hostile to the children of God must find that God is hostile to them. (Gen. xii. 3.)

And the needy shall lie down in safety. The Prophet compares his people to sheep, whom we must resemble, if we wish to have God for our keeper. No metaphor is more frequently employed in Scripture than this. When the Lord chastises us, we are like sheep that are scattered, and exposed to wolves and robbers; but when he punishes our enemies, he intends to gather us together again, that we may dwell in a safe and quiet place. This is what Isaiah means when he says, *in safety.* There are therefore two things which the Lord here promises; first, pastures, that is, everything that is necessary for food and raiment; and, secondly, safety and protection, that we may be protected and defended from every injury. These two things belong to the duty of a shepherd, and they include all that is necessary for our salvation.

And I will kill thy root with famine. He now turns to the Philistines, whom he compares to a tree which strikes its *roots* so deep that we would be apt to think that it cannot in any way be rooted out. But if the *root* be dried up, the tree also, however deeply laid, must decay. Hence we ought to infer that the condition of the wicked is never so firmly established that the Lord cannot easily overturn it; for not only will he cut off branches, but he will also dry up and destroy the root which is hidden under ground.

And he will slay thy remnant. This is commonly viewed as referring to Hezekiah; but I prefer, as I have already explained, to extend it to the whole body, of which he speaks as of one man, and of which the king was the head, and represented Christ himself. We might also refer it to the Assyrians, and to any others, whose agency the Lord employed in destroying the Philistines; for it is customary with the Jews to employ indefinite language when they speak of the agents by means of whom God executes his judgments.

31. *Howl, O gate.* Here the Prophet makes use of amplifications, that by means of them he may seal his predictions on the hearts of the godly, and may press with greater earnestness those things of which they might otherwise have entertained doubts. In explaining another passage, where it is said that *her gates shall mourn and lament,* (Is. iii. 26,) we have stated that *the gates* mean crowded places, in which public meetings were held.[1] He threatens that there will be *mourning* in each of the cities, and mourning of no ordinary kind, for it will be spread through every one of the most crowded assemblies.

For a smoke cometh from the north. We may understand *Smoke* to mean *Fire,* so that the sign will denote the thing signified; for the *smoke* appears before the *fire* burns. By *the north* we may understand the Assyrians as well as the Jews, for both of them lay to *the north* with respect to the land of the Philistines. Yet I prefer to interpret it as referring to the Jews themselves, though I would not argue against the opposite exposition. The Philistines thought, as we have already said, that they were gainers by what the Jews suffered, as, for instance, when they sustained any defeat from the Assyrians; but they at length found that they suffered along with the Jews in such a defeat. Something of this kind happened, not long ago, to many nations who had taken great delight in seeing their enemies vanquished by the Turk: they found that such victories were destructive and *mournful* to themselves; for, after the defeat of those whom they wished to see destroyed, the road to themselves was likewise thrown open, and they also were defeated.

[1] See page 148.

And no one shall be alone on his appointed day.[1] When he adds, that at that time *no one shall be solitary,*[2] this relates to the enemies; and he says, that *on an appointed day,* that is, when God shall have determined to ruin the land of the Philistines, the enemies shall be endued with such power and authority, that no one will remain unemployed at home, but all will be ready for battle; as if one who intended to applaud the authority of some prince should say that his subjects, if he but lift up his finger, assemble and give their attendance.

32. *And what shall be answered to the messengers of the nation?* I choose to interpret this of any *nations* whatever, and not of a single *nation;* for strangers, as soon as they enter into any city, are wont to ask what is done, that they may hear some news. It is as if he had said, "*What shall be answered* to strangers when they shall inquire? And what report shall be spread when the Philistines shall have been vanquished?"

That the LORD *hath founded Zion.* By this he means that the destruction of the land of the Philistines will be a signal proof of God's compassion towards his people, that all may understand *that the* LORD is the guardian and protector of Judea, which he had chosen to be his own. The *foundation* is nothing else than God's gracious adoption, by which he promised to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7) and his posterity that *he would be a God to them;* and next, when he determined that a temple should be built on *Zion,* (2 Chron. iii. 1; Ps. lxv. 1, and lxxxiv. 7,) that the remembrance of his name might there be preserved. That *foundation* does not consist of lime or stones, but of the gracious promises of eternal life, by which his grace was always known to all the godly. The Prophet therefore shows that this destruction of the Philistines will be a signal proof, by means of which the most

[1] *And none* shall be *alone* (or, he shall *not* be *alone*) *in his appointed times,* (or, *assemblies.*)—Eng. Ver.

[2] "Jonathan interprets it thus: *There will be no one* to cause delay *in his time* in the military forces whom God will assemble to come against you; *there will be no one* to retard their progress, that he may be *solitary,* that he may come *alone;* but all will come at once with prodigious violence."—*Jarchi.*

distant nations will learn that God preserves and guards his people whom he hath chosen.

And the poor of his people will have confidence in it.[1] He does not mean that the hope of believers will be placed in *Zion*, as when we say that we ought to hope in God, but that the inhabitants of *Zion* shall dwell in a safe and quiet place, as the prophets often teach, in other passages, that *salvation is in Zion.* (Joel ii. 32.) Isaiah, therefore, does not mean that the *confidence* of the godly is placed in the Church, but he shows that the godly are preserved in it, because the Lord defends it.

Yet the Lord intends to make trial of our faith, that we may not think that we are in every respect happy; and therefore he calls them *poor*, that we may not think that we are exempted from ordinary calamities, though we are under God's protection. Can any higher consolation be brought to us, than to learn that the inhabitants of the Church of God, though they are liable to a great variety of afflictions, are out of all danger? Let us therefore apply that consolation to our calamities, and not faint through impatience, when we are informed that God takes care of us, and when we absolutely know that we are in safety.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought to silence:

2. He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads *shall be* baldness, *and* every beard cut off.

3. In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.

4. And Heshbon shall cry, and

1. Onus Moab. Quoniam in nocte vastata est Ar-Moab, in silentium redacta est; certè in nocte vastata est Kir-Moab, in silentium redacta.

2. Ascendet in domum, et Dibon ad excelsa, ad fletum super Nebo, et super Medba Moab, ululabit. Super omne caput ejus calvitium, et omnis barba detonsa.

3. In compitis ejus accincti erunt sacco; super tecta ejus et in vicis ejus omnis ululabit, descendet ad fletum.

4. Vociferabitur Hesbon et Ele-

[1] *Shall trust in it,* (or, *betake themselves unto it.*)—Eng. Ver.

Elealeh; their voice shall be heard *even* unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

5. My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives *shall flee* unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

6. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.

7. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.

8. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

9. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

ale; usque ad Iahaz audietur vox eorum; propterea expediti Moab ululabunt; anima cujusque ululabit sibi.

5. Cor meum propter Moab vociferabitur; fugitivi ejus ad Zoar, vitulam triennem per ascensum Luhith cum fletu ascendent: per viam Horonaim clamorem contritionis excitabunt.

6. Aquæ Nimrim exinanitæ sunt; aruit gramen, defecit herba, olus non superfuit.

7. Itaque quod residuum quisque fecit, et opes suas deferent ad torrentem salicum, (*vel*, Arabes.)

8. Circuivit clamor terminos Moab, usque in Eglaim ululatus ejus, et usque in Beer-Elim ululatus ejus.

9. Quia aquæ Dimon implebuntur sanguine; quoniam ponam super Dimon additiones iis qui evaserint de Moab leones, et reliquiis terræ.

1. *The burden of Moab.* Here the Prophet prophesies against the *Moabites*, who were neighbours to the Jews and related to them by blood; for we know that the *Moabites* were descended from Lot, who was Abraham's nephew. (Gen. xi. 31, and xix. 37.) Those nations being so closely related, humanity at least demanded that they should maintain some friendly intercourse with each other. But no relationship prevented the *Moabites* from cherishing hostility towards the Jews, or even from harassing them whenever it was in their power; which is an evidence of a savage and barbarous disposition. To them also, on account of their cruelty towards the people of God, to whom they ought to have conducted themselves with brotherly love, the Prophet therefore threatens destruction.

We ought to remember the design of these predictions. It cannot be believed that they were of any advantage to the *Moabites*, even though they had heard from the mouth of the Prophet himself the words which we read; but he neither

addressed them with his voice, nor sent to them a written communication. It was therefore to believers, rather than to them, that the Prophet looked, and for two reasons. The first reason was, that when they saw so many changes taking place, cities overturned, kingdoms destroyed and succeeding one another, they might not think that this world is governed by the blind violence of fortune, but might acknowledge the providence of God. If nothing had been foretold, the minds of men, having a strong tendency to foolishness, and being strangely blind to the works of God, might have been disposed to attribute all this to chance; but when they had been forewarned by the Prophets, they beheld the judgments of God as from a lofty watch-tower. To us also in the present day Isaiah has, as it were, pointed out with the finger what was then hidden. In his predictions we behold God sitting on his judgment-seat, and regulating everything according to his pleasure; and although the wicked in various ways vented their mad rage, still the Lord made use of their agency to execute his judgments. The second design which the prophets had in view was, that while the whole world was shaken, the Jews might know that God took care of their safety, and that he testified the warmth of his affection for the Church, by taking vengeance on her enemies by whom she had been barbarously treated.

Ar-Moab. The Hebrew word עִר (*Ar*) means *a city;* as קִיר (*kīr*) means *a wall;* but as עִר מוֹאָב (*Ar-Mōăb*) was one of the chief cities of the *Moabites,* it is supposed to be here a proper name. We might indeed explain both words as appellatives, to convey a threatening of the overthrow of the fortified towns of which the *Moabites* are proud; but I rather adopt the ordinary interpretation. Here therefore Isaiah has given a description, that we may behold in it the overthrow of the Moabites, when their chief cities are destroyed.

In the night. By *the night* he means a sudden and unexpected occurrence, which the Moabites did not dread. *Night* being appropriated to rest, if anything happen at that time, it is viewed as sudden and unlooked for, and therefore excites violent alarm. Besides, he intended to rebuke the

Moabites for being free from anxiety, considering themselves to be fortified by defences on every hand, and placed beyond the reach of all danger.

Is brought to silence. That is, *is destroyed,* and hence also *Silence* sometimes means Death. Others disregard the metaphor, and choose to render it, *She is cut off;* but I leave that point undecided. What Isaiah declares as to the *Moabites,* Scripture pronounces as to the reprobate, that destruction is at hand, and, when they are looking for nothing of that kind, will fearfully overwhelm them. (Jer. xxiii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.)

2. *He shall go up into the house.*[1] So far as relates to the words, some pass by the Hebrew noun בּית, (*băith;*) but as it signifies *a house* and *a temple,* it is probable that it was the word commonly used for a *temple,* as in many other passages *the house of God* means *the temple.*[2] (Exod. xxiii. 19, and xxxiv. 26; Deut. xxiii. 18; Josh. ix. 23.) By representing the Moabites as bowing down before their idols, he at the same time condemns their superstition in worshipping their idol Chemosh, as may easily be inferred from 1 Kings xi. 7, and Jer. xlviii. 7, 13. "The Moabites," says Isaiah, "shall betake themselves to their god when matters are so desperate, but to no purpose; for they shall find in him no assistance."

And to Dibon to the high places. This makes it still more evident that he is speaking of the Temple; and it is beyond a doubt that the Moabites had a fortress remarkable and celebrated above the rest, in which they had built *high places* in honour of their idol. Being ignorant of the true God, to whom they might betake themselves in adversity, we need not wonder that they betake themselves to an idol, in conformity to their ordinary custom. By doing this they increased their misery, and brought upon themselves an accumulation of all distresses; for they inflamed the wrath of God still more by those very means which they considered to be fitted for appeasing his wrath. He therefore wished to

[1] *He is gone up to Bajith.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] *He is gone up to Moab into the house.*—*Jarchi.* Breithaupt remarks that the Hebrew word הבּית (*habbăith*) is sometimes viewed as a proper name, and that in the version of Junius and Tremellius it is rendered *Bajith.* —*Ed.*

state more plainly the condition of the ungodly, who have no refuge in adversity; for as to those remedies which they think will be adapted to their diseases, nothing can be more destructive to them, since they excite more and more the Lord's indignation.

Moab shall howl over Nebo and over Medeba. *Nebo* also was one of the cities of the *Moabites.* The Prophet has already named two of them, *Ar* and *Kir;* he now adds a third, *Nebo;* and lastly he mentions a fourth, *Medeba;* as if he had said that this destruction would not only seize the extremities of that country, but would reach its inmost recesses, so that not one corner could be exempted.

On every head. Every nation has its peculiar ceremonies to denote mourning or joy. The Italians and other western nations allowed the hair and beard to grow when they were in mourning; and hence arose the phrase, *to lengthen the beard.* On the other hand, the eastern nations shaved the head and beard, which they reckoned to be ornamental; and when they reversed their ordinary custom, that was a token of mourning.[1] Nothing else therefore is meant than that the condition of the whole kingdom will be so mournful, that the indications of mirth will be laid aside, and all will wear the tokens of grief and lamentation.

3. *In his streets.*[2] He proceeds with the same subject, describing more fully the tokens of mourning, in which the eastern nations abound more than others; for, having quicker understandings and keener feelings, they express their emotions by outward signs more than others do, who, being slower in apprehension, are likewise slower in movement and gesture. It was no doubt faulty in them that they indulged in so many ceremonies and gesticulations; but the Prophet spoke of them as what was known and common, only for the purpose of describing the grief which would follow the desolation of that country.

Every one shall howl and descend to weeping.[3] It was with

[1] "Shaving the head and face are the eastern tokens of mourning for the dead. (Isa. iii. 24; Jer. xli. 5; Micah i. 16.)"—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] *In their streets.*—Eng. Ver.

[3] *Weeping abundantly.* (Heb. *descending into weeping,* or, *coming down with weeping.*)—Eng. Ver.

good reason that he added this description ; for we are never moved by predictions, unless the Lord place them, as it were, before our eyes. Lest the Jews should think that these matters might be lightly passed by, when he described that destruction, he determined to mention also *mourning, weeping, and howling,* that they might see almost with their own eyes those events which appear to be incredible, for the Moabites were at that time in a state of profound peace, and believers had the more need of being confirmed, that they might not call this prophecy in question. By the same means he points out the despair to which unbelievers are liable in adversity, for the support on which they rely is insecure.

4. *And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh.* Here he names other cities ; for his design is to bind up, as it were, in a bundle all the cities of that country, that they may be involved in the general destruction ; as if he had said, that none at all shall be exempted.

Therefore the light-armed soldiers of Moab shall howl. Though עַל כֵּן (*gnăl kēn*) literally signifies *therefore,* yet some think that a reason is not here assigned ; but that is of little importance. The Prophet shows that there will be none that does not *howl ;* for he declares that the bold and courageous shall mourn. Next he adds, *the soul of every one shall howl to him.*[1] Every one shall be so engrossed with his own grief, that he will not think of his neighbours.

5. *My heart shall cry out for Moab.* At length he assumes the character of a mourner. But it may be thought to be strange and inconsistent in him to bewail the calamity of the Moabites ; for he ought rather to have lamented the destruction of the Church, and to have rejoiced at the ruin of her enemies. It is customary with the prophets, however, to assume in this manner the character of those whose calamities they foretell, and thus to exhibit their condition, as it were, on a stage ; by which means they produce a stronger impression than if they delivered their instruction in a direct form. Yet there can be no doubt that the prophets shuddered at the judgments of God, even against the wicked ;

[1] *His life shall be grievous unto him.*—Eng. Ver.

though the meaning which I have stated is simpler and more appropriate, and may easily be inferred from frequent usage.

His fugitives to Zoar,[1] *a heifer of three years old.* He calls them *fugitives* who shall escape from it; for he means that those who shall escape from Moab will come even *to Zoar.*[2] Now, he compares *Zoar* to *a heifer of three years old,* which is in full vigour, and has not felt the pangs of birth, or toil, or the yoke, but revels in the buoyancy of mirth and wantonness. When men are hard pressed by an invading army, they flee to cities which have not been attacked, and which appear to be the farthest removed from danger. Such was *Zoar,* for it had never been attacked by enemies. Yet, if it be thought better to view it as applying to the whole country, I have no objection; for Jeremiah appears to speak in general terms, though he borrows many statements from Isaiah. (Jer. xlviii. 34.) But perhaps in that passage also he names both *Zoar* and *Horonaim,* or rather the whole of the country between them.

If you extend it to the whole nation, the meaning will be, "The Moabites have enjoyed the highest luxury, and every kind of abundance, and hitherto have suffered no distress. Hence has arisen their stubbornness, and, in order to subdue them, they must be banished and driven even to *Zoar.* Now *Zoar* was a town very far removed from the Moabites; and, therefore, he means that they cannot provide for their safety but by *fleeing* to a distance. Here all with whom the Lord deals tenderly are taught not to exalt themselves, or to provoke God by their wantonness, but to be modest even amidst the highest prosperity, and likewise to be prepared for every change, when the Lord shall be pleased to throw them down from their prosperity.

By the going up of Luhith. He describes other parts of the country of Moab, and delineates the flight and mourn-

[1] *His fugitives* shall flee *unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old,* (or, *to the borders thereof, even as an heifer.*)—Eng. Ver.

[2] "Jonathan translates the word בריחה, (*bĕrēchahh,*) as if it had been written בורחים, (*bōrăchim,*) that is, *those who flee;* so that the meaning will be, 'Some of them shall *flee,* in order to preserve themselves, *even to Zoar,* as Lot, their father, once did, (Gen. xix. 23,) who fled to *Zoar.*'"—*Jarchi.*

ing of that nature which should spread throughout the whole land.

By the way of Horonaim they shall raise the cry of sorrow. The words which we have translated, *they shall raise up a cry,* some render, *they shall bruise* or *break themselves by crying,* and think there is a transposition of the letters, and that ע (*ain*) is doubled; and thus the root of the verb would be רעה, (*rāgnāh.*) But as it made little difference in the meaning of the passage, I have adhered to the commonly received opinion, that יעערו (*yĕgnōgnērū*) is derived from the verb עור, (*gnūr.*) If it be thought better to make the verb signify *break,* the meaning will be, "There shall be a shaking, and, as it were, a *breaking* of the members of the body, when arm is dashed against arm."

6. *The waters of Nimrim.* By an exaggerated form of expression he gives a more enlarged view of this desolation. He says that *the grass is withered,* which takes place when God leaves any soil destitute of all nourishment. *The waters* will be taken away, which probably were highly necessary for that dry and parched country; for soils of that kind produce nothing without irrigation. Though the style is exaggerated, yet nothing is stated but what is strictly true; for the Prophet did not go beyond proper bounds, but found it necessary to use bold expressions to suit the ignorance of the people, in order to inform them that a land which is deprived of the blessing of God will be like a desert without any beauty.

7. *Therefore what every one hath left.*[1] This corresponds to the ordinary expression, (*Ce qu'il aura espargné,*) *Whatever he shall have spared.* He means the riches that are laid up, and describes what usually happens in countries which are invaded by an enemy. All the inhabitants are wont to convey their riches elsewhere, and to lay them up in some safe place, that they may afterwards bring them back when peace has been restored.

To the brook of the willows. He means that they will

[1] *Therefore the abundance they have gotten.*—Eng. Ver. *Therefore the substance which they have saved.*—*Stock. The riches which they have gained.*—*Lowth.*

have no storehouse, no fortress in which they can lay them up with safety; so that they will be compelled to hide them among *the willows.* This certainly is the lowest wretchedness, when the enemy is attacking us, and we can find no storehouse for laying up those things which we have collected with great industry. These *willows* were probably situated in some remote and sequestered place. Others explain it as referring to enemies, that they will bring the fruits of their robbery *to the brook,* to divide among themselves the general plunder.

8. *The cry is gone round about the borders of Moab.*[1] כִּי, (*ki,*) *for,* is added for the sake of ornament. He means that every part of that country all around shall be full of *crying* and *howling;* because that destruction reaches from one extremity to another. Besides the *crying* he twice mentions the *howling,* to denote the excess of grief, as men who are in despair surrender themselves entirely to lamentation.

9. *For the waters of Dimon shall be filled with blood.*[2] Here he describes not only *grief* and *howling,* flight or trembling, or the covetousness of enemies in plundering their wealth, but the slaughter of men. How great must this have been, when large and magnificent rivers, such as *Dimon* was, are *filled with blood!*

For I will lay upon Dimon additions.[3] By *additions* he means that the Lord, in whose name he speaks, will multiply the murders; so that the dead bodies shall be heaped up, and there shall be no end to cruelty and slaying. Now, though the Assyrians were cruel in this slaughter, yet the Lord was not cruel; for he justly punished the barbarity of the Moabites which they basely exercised towards the Jews, on whom they ought to have had compassion. It was right that they should suffer the same punishment which they had inflicted on others.

To those who have escaped of Moab lions. These also are the *additions* of which he spake, or, at least, a part of them.

[1] For *the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "Alluding to the name *Dimon,* which signifies *Bloodtown."—Rosenmüller.*

[3] *For I will bring more* (Heb. *additions*) *upon Dimon.*—Eng. Ver.

This may be regarded as the copestone of that calamity; so that if any detachments of the enemy attempted to escape, and to rescue themselves from the slaughter, they had to encounter *lions*[1] and wild beasts, by which they were devoured. "They will, indeed," says he, "rescue themselves from the slaughter, but they will not on that account be safe, nor will they escape the hand of God. And this is the true meaning of the Prophet, if we carefully examine the scope of the whole passage; for he intended to deepen the picture of that distressing calamity by adding, that even the small remnant which shall be rescued from the slaughter will fall into the jaws of *lions*. The hand of the Lord pursues the wicked in such a manner that they cannot in any way escape; for if they avoid one danger, they immediately meet with another. Let us remember that these things are spoken by the Prophet for the consolation of the godly, that they may fortify their minds by some promise against the cruelty of their enemies, who shall at length be destroyed, and shall nowhere find a refuge either in their gods, or in fortresses, or in lurking-places, or in flight.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

1. Mittite agnum dominatori terræ de petra deserti ad montem filiæ Sion.

2. For it shall be, *that* as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, *so* the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

2. Erit autem sicut avis emissa, recedens e nido: ita erunt filiæ Moab ad transitus Arnon.

3. Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.

3. Cogite consilium, facite judicium; pone sicut noctem umbram tuam in medio meridiei; absconde expulsos, profugum ne prodas.

4. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to

4. Peregrinentur apud te ejecti mei. Moab, sis illis latibulum a facie

[1] "This I take to be *the plague of lions*, recorded in 2 Kings xvii. 25, which afflicted the new inhabitants of the land of Israel, and the remnant of the Moabites, suffered to continue there by Shalmanezer. Other interpretations are proposed; but it is best, in obscure local prophecies, to adhere to the little light afforded by the records of the times."—*Stock*.

them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

5. And in mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

6. We have heard of the pride of Moab, (he *is* very proud,) *even* of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: *but* his lies *shall* not *be* so.

7. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely *they are* stricken.

8. For the fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof; they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea:

9. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for the shouting for thy summer-fruits, and for thy harvest, is fallen.

10. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses; I have made *their vintage*-shouting to cease.

11. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

12. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

13. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

14. But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all

vastatoris; quoniam cessavit emunctor, finitus est vastator, consumptus est conculcator e terra.

5. Et præparabitur in misericordia solium, sedebitque super ipsum in firmitate, in tabernaculo David qui judicet, et quærat judicium, et acceleret justitiam.

6. Audivimus superbiam Moab (superbus est valde) superbiam ejus, et arrogantiam ejus, et insolentiam (*vel, indignationem*) ejus. Sed non rata erunt mendacia ejus.

7. Propterea ululabit Moab ad Moab, totus ululabit, propter fundamenta Kir-hareseth; gemetis tantum percussi.

8. Quoniam vites Hesbon excisæ sunt, vitis Sibma. Domini gentium conculcarunt eximias ejus propagines (*vel, palmites*) quæ usque ad Iazer pervenerant; erraverant usque ad desertum, nobiles ejus plantæ prostratæ sunt, quæ transibant mare.

9. Propterea flebo in fletu Iazer vitis Sibma; inebriabo te lachrymis meis Hesbon et Eleale; quoniam super collectionem tuam, et super messem tuam irruet (*vel, cadet*) canticum.

10. Sublatum est gaudium et exultatio ab agro fertili; in vineis non exultabitur, nec jubilabitur. Vinum in torcularibus non calcabit calcator, canticum quiescere feci.

11. Propterea viscera mea super Moab quasi cithara sonabunt, et interiora mea super Kir-hareseth.

12. Et erit cum apparuerit fatigatum esse Moab super excelsa, tunc veniet ad sanctuarium precandi causa; nec proficiet.

13. Hoc est verbum quod protulit Iehova super Moab ab hoc tempore.

14. Nunc, inquam, locutus est Iehova, dicens, Tres anni, quasi anni mercenarii; et tunc in ignominiam vertetur gloria Moab, in tota multi-

that great multitude; and the remnant *shall be* very small *and* feeble.

tudine ejus, quamvis multa; et reliquiæ ejus paucæ, exiguæ, et invalidæ.

1. *Send ye a lamb.* Here the Prophet scoffs at the Moabites for not acknowledging God at the proper time, but recklessly waiting for the stroke of his hand, till they were completely destroyed. It is, therefore, a condemnation of late repentance, when men cannot be brought to obedience by any warnings, and continue in obstinate opposition to God. Where the disease is incurable, an exhortation of this kind is appropriate; and this ought to be carefully observed, for both Jews and Christians misinterpret this passage.

Jerome explains it as referring to Christ, because he drew his birth from the Moabites, (Ruth i. 4; Matt. i. 5,) from whom Ruth was descended; and that opinion has been adopted by almost all Christians; as if the Prophet had said, "O Lord, though a judgment so severe as this awaits the Moabites, still thou wilt not utterly destroy them; for they will send thee *a Lamb, the ruler of the world.*" But that interpretation, being destitute of plausibility, need not be refuted.

On the other hand, the Jews think that these words were spoken because, while the Jews were in a depressed condition, the Moabites ceased to pay the tribute which they owed them, but that, after having prophesied about the restoration of the kingdom of Judah, Isaiah likewise added an exhortation to remind them to acknowledge their king. They even go so far as to say that it serves the purpose of a royal edict, taking them to task for their disloyalty, "Send the tribute which you owe." But we nowhere read that the Moabites were subjects or tributaries to the Jews, and there is no probability in the conjecture. Nor does the passage which they quote (2 Kings iii. 5, 6) give them any support; for that passage relates to *the king of Israel*, and expressly mentions *Ahab* and *Samaria*, who cherished, as we are aware, the utmost hatred against the Jews.

I therefore adhere to the interpretation which I first noticed, as the true and natural interpretation; for the de-

sign of the Prophet is to condemn the Moabites for not having repented in due season, and to tell them that they will now in vain do what they might easily have done formerly, and with great advantage to themselves. We ought, therefore, to view it as spoken ironically, (εἰρωνικῶς,) *Send;* as if he had said that there is no hope of pardon, that they will *send* in vain. When the wicked are warned, they indolently disregard all exhortation; when they are punished, they gaze around them with distressful looks, seeking assistance in every direction, and trying every method of relief, but unsuccessfully, for they gain no advantage. Isaiah, therefore, reproaches them for obstinacy and rebellion, and shows that there will be no time for repentance, when they meet with the destruction which they deserve.

To the ruler of the world. The opinion of the Jews, that this denotes Hezekiah, is at variance with all reason; for אֶרֶץ (*ĕrĕtz*) does not here denote a particular country, but rather the whole *world,* of which he speaks in general terms. The appellation *Ruler* must therefore be viewed as referring to God himself. By *a lamb,* he means what was to be offered in sacrifice; for even the Gentiles acknowledged that they worshipped God when they offered sacrifices.

From the rock[1] *of the desert.* He gives the name of *the rock of the desert* to the city, which is supposed to have been the chief city of the Moabites;[2] though it is possible that he intended to include the whole of the country, and thus a part will be taken for the whole. *To the mountain of the daughter of Zion;* that is, to God's authorized temple, in

[1] *From Sela,* (or, *Petra.*)—Eng. Ver.

[2] "PETRA, *Rock,* also called Sela, (Is. xvi. 1,) and Joktheel, (2 Kings xiv. 7.) The capital of Idumea, and one of the most remarkable cities of the ancient world. For more than a thousand years this city remained unknown and unvisited, till Burckhardt discovered it in 1812. It was afterwards visited, with some difficulty, by Messrs. Legh, Banks, Captains Irby and Mangles, as well as by M. Linant and M. Laborde." Those who have not access to the details of those enterprizing researches, or who wish to see it ably stated and argued, that "the present condition of *Petra* furnishes a remarkable fulfilment of Scripture prophecy," will do well to read the article PETRA in Dr. Eadie's *Biblical Cyclopædia,* from which the above extracts are taken; an article which draws largely both from the narratives of travellers and from the inspired writers, and compresses within moderate limits a large amount of information.—*Ed.*

which sacrifices were offered according to the injunction of the Law. (Deut. xii. 5, 6, 7; 2 Chron. vii. 12.) This is a remarkable passage against obstinate men, who set aside all instruction, and fearlessly despise God, till they are visited by his judgments.

2. *It shall be as a bird let loose.*[1] The Prophet now shows what he meant by the former mockery, that the Moabites ought not at that time to think of *sending* sacrifices, because they will not be able to provide for their safety in any other way than by leaving their native country. By the metaphor of *birds* he describes the terror with which they shall be struck, so that they will flee even at the rustling of a leaf. He threatens that the Moabites, who had abused their tranquillity, shall have a trembling and wearisome flight.

3. *Assemble a council.*[2] He proceeds with the same subject; for if we wish rightly to understand this passage, we must set before our minds the dreadful ruin of the Moabites. Their crimes are brought to remembrance, that all may see more clearly how deservedly they are punished. When everything was in their power, they freely indulged in licentiousness, and would not listen to any reproofs; but now, when they are deprived of everything, they groan, and seek remedies which are nowhere to be found. The Lord deals with the reprobate in such a manner that, in order to leave them without excuse, he bestows upon them, and places in their hands, everything that they need; but when, through their wicked passion, they have abused and turned everything to a wicked purpose, he deprives them of all aid and support, and utterly destroys them.

Execute judgment. While the Moabites enjoyed prosperity, they cared little about what was good and right; while it was in their power to rule, and to have their kingdom established, in a just manner, they abused their power for the purpose of tyranny. Now that they were stripped of all authority, and were exiles and fugitives, Isaiah ironically advises them to *assemble councils* and *execute judgments*, which they had formerly overturned through fraud and in-

[1] *As a wandering bird.*—Eng. Ver.
[2] *Take* (Heb. *Bring*) *counsel.*—Eng. Ver.

justice. Isaiah has in view that time when all power and authority was taken out of the hands of the Moabites. The upbraiding is similar to that with which the Lord addresses Adam, (Gen. iii. 22,) *Behold, Adam is become as one of us,* ridiculing him with the biting taunt, that he was not satisfied with his exalted attainments, and wished to rival God himself.

In like manner, the Moabites, not satisfied with their ornaments and wealth, wretchedly harassed and plundered the Israelites and Jews, and formed wicked plans against them. Having abused the excellent gift of God, they therefore deserved to have this reproof addressed to them, which is equally applicable to all the reprobate, who proudly vaunt in prosperity and barbarously abuse it for harassing the godly. Seeing that they basely pollute those things which the Lord had set apart to their proper use, it is right that they should be deprived of them and reduced to the lowest poverty. We have instances of this every day. How comes it that those who were raised to the highest rank of honour fall down headlong, but because the Lord punishes their tyrannical rule and their crimes? The Lord also ridicules their upbraiding and reproachful language, their wailings, and even their complaints; as when they exclaim, "O that I had the wealth which I once enjoyed! O that I were restored to my former condition!" For then repentance will be too late.

Make thy shadow. The Moabites might, as I have already hinted, have given some relief to the wretched Jews, when they were harassed by the Assyrians; or, at least, if they had had a spark of humanity, they ought to have protected the fugitives; but, on the contrary, they persecuted them, and added to the weight of their afflictions, which were already oppressive. It was highly proper that the Moabites should be the subjects of that cruelty which they had exercised towards others; that, when they had been driven from their dwellings, and were exiles and wanderers, they should nowhere find any solace, any *shadow* to shelter them from the heat; for why should they enjoy the consolations which they had barbarously refused to others?

As the night in the midst of noon-day.[1] By *noon-day* is here meant the most scorching heat. This metaphor is frequently employed in Scripture, that the Lord was *like a cloud at noon, and like a pillar of fire by night;* for he once was so in the wilderness. (Exod. xiii. 21, 22; Num. xiv. 14; Deut. i. 33.) This mode of expression, being customary, was retained by the Prophets, though they did not relate the history.

Hide the banished. He means the Jews, whom the Assyrians persecuted and harassed, and whom the Moabites at the same time treated cruelly. It was their duty to shelter and relieve the fugitives, and especially those who fled to them for protection; but seeing that they drove them out, it was proper that they should be driven out in the same manner, and deprived of all assistance and support; for it is a righteous sentence which the Lord pronounces, when he enjoins that *the same measure which every one metes shall be measured to him again.* (Deut. xix. 19, 21; Matt. vii. 2.) Now the Prophet calls on the Moabites to acknowledge their sins, so as to confess that they are justly punished for their cruelty. Yet he rather has the Jews in his eye, in order to inform them that God does not disregard their afflictions, for they are told that he will be their avenger.

4. *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab.* The Prophet addresses the *Moabites*, as if he were humbly beseeching them in the name of the people at large. "You are neighbours, related to us by blood; receive and assist those who are in distress: and if you do not choose to assist, at least do them no harm." God, who usually undertakes the cause of his people, is represented by the Prophet as if he performed the part of a suppliant. It is certain, that the Moabites did not at all act in this manner towards the Jews, but, on the contrary, that they joined their efforts with the enemies of the Jews to do them injury. But, as I said a little before, the Prophet sets before our eyes that justice which even nature demands, that the cruel violation of it may be the more abhorred.

[1] "Make a shadow for thee *at noon*, to throw darkness over thee, *as in the night*, that by means of it thou mayest be concealed from the face of thy enemies."—*Jarchi.*

This passage ought to be carefully observed; for God shows how great is the care which he takes of his people, since the injuries done to them affect him in the same manner as if they had been done to himself; as he declares by Zechariah, that *whenever they are touched, the apple of his eye is touched.* (Zech. ii. 8.) He *hears the groaning,* (Ps. cii. 20,) and observes the tears, of wretched men who call upon him; (Ps. xii. 5, and xxxviii. 9;) and though this be not always visible to us, yet in due season he shows that he has heard them.

Let us therefore learn from this passage to be kind and dutiful to fugitives and exiles, and especially to believers, who are banished for their confession of the word. No duty can be more pleasing or acceptable to God; and, on the other hand, nothing is more hateful or abominable in his sight than barbarity and cruelty. If we wish to obtain any alleviation of our calamities, let us be kind and compassionate, and not refuse assistance to the needy. *Blessed,* says he, *is he that judgeth wisely about the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.* (Ps. xli. 1.) On the other hand, *he shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy.* (James ii. 13.)

When God calls them *his banished,* this may without impropriety be viewed as referring to punishment, as if he said, that by a just judgment they were *banished* from the land of Canaan, (Deut. xxviii. 64,) as he had so often threatened against them. Yet undoubtedly he likewise means, that they continue to be under his defence and protection, because, though they are banished and driven out of their native country, still he acknowledges them to be his people. That calamity which the Jews endured might be regarded as an evidence that they were cast off; but the Lord acknowledges them to be *his children,* though he chastises them severely. Hence we obtain a doctrine full of consolation, that we are reckoned in the number of his children, though sharp and heavy strokes are inflicted upon us.

For the extortioner hath ceased.[1] He now directs his discourse to the Jews, and proceeds to comfort them, as he had

[1] *For the extortioner* (Heb. *wringer*) *is at an end.*—Eng. Ver.

done formerly, by showing that, when their enemies shall be removed from the midst of them, the banishment or ruin of their enemies will also relieve their own calamities and distresses. Yet the former statements related chiefly to the Jews, though the Prophet expressly addressed the Moabites. But at that time he only threatened vengeance on enemies, while here he more clearly promises consolation to his people; as if he had said, "Thou thoughtest, O Moab, that my people were utterly ruined: but I will restrain the enemies, and put an end to that affliction. Thou shalt therefore perish; but my people shall at length be delivered from those dreadful calamities."

Perhaps it will rather be thought that there is a change of the tenses; and thus the particle כִּי, (*ki*,) which we have rendered *For*, will signify *Until*;[1] and this clause will be read in immediate connexion with the former part of the sentence. *Let my banished dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a place of concealment from the face of the destroyer, until the extortioner shall have ceased.* But as that might be thought to be a forced interpretation, I have chosen to abide by the natural meaning.

5. *And the throne shall be prepared in mercy.*[2] The Jews explain the whole of this verse as referring to Hezekiah; but this is altogether inappropriate, for the Prophet speaks of a more important restoration of the Church, and the Moabites had not been punished during the flourishing condition of Hezekiah's reign; and the blessing of God again began to burst forth on the Jews. It is as if it had been said, "All the enemies of the chosen people maliciously contrive the ruin of that kingdom, which God promised *should be established for ever.*" (2 Sam. vii. 13.) That the godly may not give way to despondency amidst the unhappy confusion, they are reminded of the perpetuity of the kingdom, of which they had been assured by a well-known prediction.

It cannot therefore be explained as referring to any other than to Christ, though I acknowledge that Hezekiah was a

[1] *Until the extortioner.* כִּי (*ki*) answers here to the Latin adverb, *usquedum.—Tayl. Concord.* quoted by Stock.

[2] *And in mercy shall the throne be established,* (or, *prepared.*)—Eng. Ver.

type of Christ, as David and the rest of his successors also were. But they conduct us to Christ, who alone is the protector and leader of his people, (John x. 16,) and who has *gathered the remnant that was scattered abroad.* (John xi. 52.) For this reason he sends back the godly to Christ, as if he had said, "You know what God you worship. He has declared that he will watch over your safety, so that under his protection you will always continue to be safe and uninjured; and if you shall at any time meet with reverses, he has promised to you a Redeemer, under whom you shall enjoy renewed and steadfast prosperity. Though for a time you may weep, yet the protector of the Church will come, and will restore you to a flourishing state of freedom. You ought, therefore, with your whole heart, to rely on the expectation of him; even when you see the Church to be in a confused and wretched condition."

This ought to be carefully observed; for all other consolations are transitory and fading, if we do not refer all of them to Christ. Let our eyes therefore be fixed on him, if we wish to be happy and prosperous; for he has promised that we shall be happy even amidst the cross, (Matt. v. 10, 11,) that agony and torments will open up the way to a blessed life, (2 Cor. iv. 17,) and that all the afflictions which we shall suffer will add to the amount of our happiness. (Rom. viii. 28.)

In mercy. Isaiah shows that this does not take place through the agency of men, but by the kindness of God, who is the builder of this *throne;* and therefore we ought to acknowledge that it is owing to his undeserved goodness that this sacred *throne* is established among us. The Prophet expressly confirms this by saying, that the cause of it must not be sought anywhere else than in the absolute *mercy* of God. Nor can any other cause be found; for God could not be induced by any excellence of character, or by merits, (of which there certainly were none,) to set up again the throne which had fallen down through the fault and through the crimes of the people; but when he saw that those whom he had adopted were ruined, he wished to give a proof of his infinite goodness. Now, if God build this

throne, by whom shall it be overturned? Will wicked men be stronger than he?

And he will sit upon it in the tabernacle of David. Almost every word here is emphatic, so that this verse deserves to be continually pondered. I do not object to the opinion that the word *tabernacle* contains an allusion to this effect, that he was but an ordinary man before he was called *to sit on a throne.* (1 Sam. xvi. 11, 12; 2 Sam. vii. 8.) The Prophet intended to draw a picture of the Church, which has no resemblance to the thrones of kings and of princes, and does not shine with gold or precious stones. Though he has held out the spiritual kingdom of Christ under a mean and despicable shape, yet at the same time he shows that that kingdom will be seen on earth and amongst men. If he had only said that *the throne* of Christ will be erected, we might have asked, Will his *throne* be in heaven, or also on earth? But now when he says, *in the tabernacle of David,* he shows that Christ reigns not only among angels but also among men, lest we should think that, in order to seek him, we must enter into heaven. Wicked men ridicule what we preach about the kingdom of Christ, as if it were some phantom of our own imagination. They wish to see it with their eyes, and to have the evidence of their senses; but we ought not to conceive of it as at all carnal, but to be satisfied with his arm and with his power.

In steadfastness. אמת (*ĕmĕth*) denotes not only *truth* but every kind of *certainty.* The Prophet means that the kingdom of Christ will be firm and steadfast, as Daniel also declared. (Dan. ii. 44, and vii. 14.) The Evangelist also says, *Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* (Luke i. 33.) In this respect it is distinguished from the ordinary condition of kingdoms, which, even when they are founded on great and enormous wealth, crumble down or even fall by their own weight, so that they have no more permanency than vanishing pictures. But Isaiah declares, that the kingdom of Christ, though it frequently totter, will be supported by the hand of God, and therefore will last for ever. These proofs ought to fortify us against temptations which arise, whenever the kingdom of Christ is attacked by enemies so

numerous and powerful that we might be ready to think that it will quickly be destroyed. Whatever weapons the world may employ, and though hell itself should vomit out flames of fire, we must abide by this promise.

Who shall judge. I understand שֹׁפֵט (*shōphēt*) to mean *Governor*, as if he had said, "There will be one who shall *govern.*" Often do we see a magnificent throne when there is no one to sit on it, and it frequently happens that kings are either idols or cattle, without judgment or skill or wisdom. But here he says, that one will sit who shall discharge the office of a good *governor;* and this is added in order to assure us that Christ will be our protector.

And seek judgment and hasten righteousness. The *judgment* and the *righteousness* which are ascribed to him, are nothing else than the protection under which he receives us, and which he will not allow to be infringed; for he will not allow wicked men who injure us to pass unpunished, while we patiently and calmly commit ourselves to his protection. By the word *hasten* he shows that he will quickly and speedily avenge our cause. This must be viewed as a rebuke to our impatience, for we never think that his assistance comes soon enough. But when we are hurried along by the violence of passion, let us remember that this arises from not submitting to his providence; for although according to the judgment of our flesh he delays, still he regulates his judgment in the best manner by the seasons which are well known to him. Let us therefore submit to his will.

6. *We have heard of the pride of Moab.* The Prophet added this statement by way of anticipation. It might be thought that men could not believe what he had promised about restoring the *throne* of the king and destroying the Moabites, who at that time were in a flourishing state of riches, and were defended by strong fortresses, and who, puffed up with the prosperity which they now enjoyed, were exceedingly *proud.* Besides, their haughtiness, with which they scorned the unhappy Jews, was a disagreeable and powerful weapon for discouraging or shaking their minds. To provide against this temptation, he relates that their boasting was well known, but that their *pride* would not

prevent God from overthrowing them; because no array of armed forces, no treasures of riches, no multitude of men, can withstand God. Isaiah speaks of it as a thing extensively known, that the Moabites are puffed up in such a manner that they dread nothing; as is commonly the case with those who are well supplied with riches and troops, that they idly exalt themselves above God and men. But whatever may be their arrogance, the Lord will easily restrain it.

His insolence.[1] The Hebrew word עברה (*gnēbrāh*) most frequently signifies *indignation;* but the connection in which it stands appears to call for something more definite. This noun is derived from the verb עבר, (*gnābār,*) to *pass* or *go beyond,* answering to the Latin word *excessus;* and therefore I have thought it better to translate it *insolence.* In a parallel passage, after the words *pride* and *arrogance* comes the phrase *haughtiness of heart.* (Jer. xlviii. 29.) Both Isaiah and Jeremiah, I have no doubt, mean that the Moabites, in consequence of their stubborn and disdainful behaviour, and their sumptuous mode of living, were so cruel, that they kindled into wrath on the most trivial occasions, and rose fiercely against others. This vice is always accompanied by haughtiness of mind; for *pride* is followed by disdain and contempt of others, and they who claim more than is due to them easily kindle into rage, and become furious for the smallest offence. In short, they can bear nothing, and are not only passionate, but likewise outrageous. They would wish that all should yield to them, and that they should yield to none. If all do not yield at their bidding, they think that injustice is done to them. This passionate temper is easily betrayed by proud men. On the other hand, the humble possess kindness accompanied by corresponding modesty, and easily forgive any one who has injured them.

His lies. The Hebrew word בדים (*baddīm*) denotes either *a man's limbs,* or *the branches of a tree;* and sometimes it is put for *divination.* Accordingly, the Greek translators[2] ren-

[1] *His wrath.*—Eng. Ver. In the author's version of this chapter, the rendering is, *his insolence;* but in his margin he puts *indignation.* Lowth and Stock make it *his anger.*—*Ed.*

[2] The rendering of the Septuagint is, *οὐχ οὕτως ἡ μαντεία σου, οὐχ οὑτως. Not so thy divination, not so.*—*Ed.*

der it *μαντεία, divination,* and it has that signification in other passages. Some think that it is here used metaphorically for *children;* others translate it either *discourses* or *thoughts;* and others render it *strength,* or *sinews.* But in my opinion it is rather put for *vain boasting;* for this word often denotes *falsehood,* and we shall soon see how well this signification applies to the present passage.

There is quite as much difference in the interpretation of the word כֵּן, (*kēn,*) *so.* The greater part suppose it to mean that "the lies are not right," or that "the discourses are not right," and others, that "the lies are not true;" and as to the substance of the matter, I am almost of their opinion. I have no doubt that the meaning of the Prophet is, that Moab foolishly utters his vain boastings, for he will not accomplish what he imagines. As to the words, the meaning of them is obtained with greater certainty from Jer. xlviii. 30. After the same words which are here employed by Isaiah, he immediately adds, for the sake of explaining them, לֹא כֵן, (*lō kēn,*) *Not so;*[1] *his lies shall not so effect it.* As if he had said, "What is determined in their hearts shall fail of accomplishment." Yet I do not think, that in the former clause the particle כֵּן (*kēn*) denotes comparison, but rather confirmation, so to speak, but negatively; for he declares that there will be no firmness or stability in his counsels, that *his divinations* or *lies will not take effect.* Proud men settle everything as if everything were in their power, and were not subject to the providence of God. "Such *arrogance,*" says Isaiah, shall be brought down, and all that they promise, as to their own strength, shall vanish away. This reminds us that pride is highly displeasing to God, and that the more men are puffed up with their riches, they are the nearer to destruction.

7. *Therefore shall Moab howl to Moab.*[2] He declares more plainly what has been already said, that this *pride,* and the cruelty which springs from it, will be the cause of their destruction. Since the Lord *resisteth the proud,* (James iv. 6;

[1] לֹא כֵן, (*lō kēn,*) *non rectum,* the frivolous predictions of his diviners, on which no wise man would place dependence.—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] *Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab.*—Eng. Ver.

1 Pet. v. 5,) it is impossible but that he will lay low this haughtiness, by which the Church is basely and shamefully trampled under foot; and, according to this example, the end of all proud men must be mournful. When he adds, *Moab to Moab*, he means that there will be what may be called a melancholy concert among them, in which they shall mutually complain of their calamities and bewail their distresses among themselves. Others render it, *on account of Moab*, but this is a feeble interpretation; for immediately afterwards it follows that the *howling* will be universal, or that it will be throughout the whole of the people.

On account of the foundations of Kir-hareseth. It is sufficiently evident that this was a chief and royal city; but some consider it to be a proper name, and others to be an appellative. There can be no doubt that the etymology of the word was derived from its being constructed of earthen materials. It is also possible that it received this name on account of the nature of the walls, which were built of bricks. It was a distinguished city in that country. He names *the foundations* rather than the city itself, because it was to be completely thrown down; as if he had said, "You shall not mourn the plundering of the city or the destruction of the buildings, but its entire overthrow; for no part of it shall be left."

You will groan, being only smitten.[1] Some translate נכאים (*nĕchāīm*) *lame;* but I prefer to take it as meaning *smitten.* The particle אך, (*āch,*) which is here prefixed to it, sometimes means *certainly* or *truly;* and sometimes it is put for *but* or *notwithstanding.* Those who explain it affirmatively suppose the meaning to be this, *You will groan, being truly smitten;* that is, "It will not be necessary for you to hire men to pretend mourning in your name, as is usually done in funerals, but you will mourn in earnest." But I prefer to take אך (*ăch*) as meaning *only;* that is, "All who shall be left will be wounded; not one shall be safe." By this mode of expression he describes the utter destruction of that city, and intimates that those who are left will lament not only the distresses of others, but also their own. They,

[1] *Shall ye mourn,* (or, *mutter,*) *surely* they are *stricken.*—Eng. Ver. *Moan even ye who* yourselves *are smitten.*—Stock.

too, will be wounded. And if such severe punishments are inflicted on the *proud,* let us learn to submit ourselves with humility and modesty, and willingly to *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.* (1 Pet. v. 6.)

8. *For the vines of Heshbon have been cut down.*[1] Here the Prophet describes allegorically the desolation of the whole country. There is reason to believe that it abounded in the choicest *vines,*[2] as may readily be inferred from this and the parallel passage. (Jer. xlviii. 32.) When Prophets threaten destruction to countries, they usually delineate their more remarkable features. For instance, were we to speak of Picardy, we certainly would say nothing about *vines,* as if we had been speaking about Orleans or Burgundy. Now, the cities mentioned by the Prophet were the chief cities of Moab.

The lords of the nations have trodden down his choicest shoots or *branches.*[3] The Prophet says that *the most valuable branches* of their vineyards were torn out by *the lords of the nations,* that is, by the conquerors, who, having subdued the nations in war, held extensive dominion.

Which reached even to Jazer.[4] This serves to point out the extent of the devastation; for this city was situated on the confines of the land of the Moabites; as if he had said, "Not only shall a part of the vineyards be cut down, but the whole country shall be wasted far and wide." Some refer this to the enemies themselves; but I would rather supply the relative אֲשֶׁר, (*ăshĕr,*) *which,* and refer it to *the vines, which* were so extensive that they *reached even to Jazer.* Thus the meaning will be, "Though these vineyards *reached even to Jazer,* and covered a very large tract of country, yet thence *to the wilderness* they will all be trodden down by *the lords of the nations.*" This agrees best with the scope of the

[1] *For the fields of Heshbon languish.*—Eng. Ver.

[2] "It ought to be known that Heshbon was a place of *fields,* and Sibmah was a place of vineyards. If you object, that all these cities were on the other side of Jordan, and at what time therefore did they fall under the hand (or power) of the Moabites? we reply. When Sennacherib carried the Reubenites and Gadites into captivity, the Moabites, who were their neighbours, came and dwelt in those cities."—*Jarchi.*

[3] *The lords of the heathen have trodden down the principal plants thereof.*—Eng. Ver.

[4] *They are come even unto Jazer.*—Eng. Ver.

passage; for it is immediately added that the vineyards *reached to the wilderness,* and even *to the sea;* by which he means that the country was exceedingly fertile, and especially that it abounded in *vines.* He says that they *crossed the sea,*[1] because, when the soil is productive, it is customary to protect by mounds what is contiguous to the sea, in order to extend the cultivation, and to oppose the violence of the waves by posts of wood and embankments, in order to obtain a large extent of available soil.

9. *Therefore I will bewail.* The Prophet here takes upon him the character of another person, as we have formerly remarked; for in the name of the Moabites he laments and groans. It is undoubtedly true that believers always shudder at the judgments of God, and cannot lay aside the feelings of human nature, so as not to commiserate the destruction of the wicked. Yet he does not describe his own feelings; but his intention is to give additional weight to his instruction, that no one may entertain a doubt as to the accomplishment. He therefore represents in the person of a Moabite, as on a stage, the mourning and grief which shall be felt by all after that calamity, in order to hold out to the Jews a confirmation of this promise, which otherwise might have been thought to be incredible.

Because on thy summer-fruits and on thy harvest a shouting shall break forth, or *shall fall.*[2] This last clause of the verse is variously explained by commentators. נפל, (*nāphăl,*) signifies to *fall,* or to *burst forth.* Those who translate it, *to burst forth,* consider the word הידד, (*hēdād,*) *shouting,* to refer to the enemies themselves; as if he had said, "*The shouting* of enemies *bursts forth on thy harvest;*" so that there is an implied contrast between this *shouting* and the *joy* of which he will afterwards speak. Others explain it to mean, that *the shoutings will be laid;* that is, "there shall be no more *shouting,* and no longer shall the glad and merry voices of the reapers be heard, cheering themselves after the

[1] "*The lake of Jazer,* as Jeremiah explains it, ch. xlviii. 32. The plantations of this vine spread onward to the banks, and seemed to overhang the whole breadth of the lake."—*Rosenmüller.*

[2] *For the shouting for thy summer-fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.* (Or, *the alarm is fallen upon thy summer-fruits and upon thy harvest.*)—Eng. Ver.

harvest." But I would rather refer it to the *shouting* of enemies; and on this point I follow a most faithful interpreter of this passage, the Prophet Jeremiah, who says that *the spoiler bursts forth*, (Jer. xlviii. 32,) where Isaiah speaks of the *shouting* of the enemy; as if he had said, "When thou shalt make preparations for gathering in thy harvest and thy vintage, the enemies will *rush* in, and, instead of joy and cheerful song, their *shouting* shall be heard, which shall drive thee far away."

10. *Joy is taken away.* He confirms, by different words, what he has now said, that the whole country shall be desolate and forsaken, so that there shall never again be in it a harvest or a vintage. When he threatens that God will cause the vine-dressers to cease to sing, he refers to an ancient custom; for when they gathered the vintage, they usually testified their joy both by dancing and by singing. Hence these words of Virgil, *The exhausted vine-dresser now addresses by song his farthest rows.*[1] In like manner, the sailors, when they approach the harbour, raise their shout of joy, (κέλευσμα,) because, having finished their toils, and escaped dangers, they see that they have hope of obtaining some leisure or refreshment. It is as if the Prophet had said, "When the produce of the harvest shall be taken away, nothing will be left to them but to lament their poverty."

11. *Therefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab.* Assuming the character of a Moabite, the Prophet again describes excessive lamentation, proceeding from grief so intense that even the bowels make a distressing noise; for by the sign he intended to point out the reality. We have formerly explained the object of those lively descriptions, which is, to bring the events, as it were, before our eyes, and to lead us to entertain stronger hopes of those things which appear to go beyond all belief. By again naming *Kir-Hareseth*, the chief city, and thus taking a part for the whole, he describes the destruction of the whole country.

12. *And it shall be.* He again returns to that statement which he formerly noticed, namely, that idolaters in their affliction betake themselves to their idols, hoping to obtain some relief from them. Yet it means somewhat more; for

[1] Jam canit extremos effœtus vinitor antes.—*Virg. Georg.* ii. 417.

while idolaters have their ordinary temples and places of worship, if any uncommon calamity befalls them, they go to another temple more sacred than the rest, expecting that there they will be more abundantly favoured with the presence of their god. In like manner, the Papists of the present day, when they are reduced to any uncommon danger, (for this fault has existed in all ages,) think that they will more readily obtain their wish by running to St. Claude, or to Mary of Loretto, or to any other celebrated idol, than if they assembled in some neighbouring church. They resolve that their extraordinary prayers shall be offered up in a church which is at a great distance. It is in this sense that the Prophet applies the term *Sanctuary* to that which was most highly celebrated among the Moabites, and says that they will go to it, but without any advantage. Now it is evident from sacred history that their most celebrated temple was dedicated to *Chemosh.* (1 Kings xi. 7.)

And shall not profit by it.[1] The phrase לֹא יוּכַל, (*lō yūchăl,*) *they shall not be able,* is explained by some to mean, that they shall at length be so completely worn out that they will not have sufficient strength to go to the temple. But I think it better to render it thus, *he shall not profit by it;* for he shuts out the Moabites from all hope of safety, by saying that they will find no protection even in their gods.

When it is seen. The word נִרְאָה, (*nĭrāh,*) *seen,* is emphatic. It means that idolaters are not guided by reason, but rather by the impressions made on their senses, like brute beasts: for as the beasts judge by feeling, smelling, and seeing, so idolaters have no other guide than the judgment of the flesh. Accordingly, if any one shall show that they are doing wrong, he will gain nothing by it. Though they have often known by experience that they gain nothing by so many laborious exertions, they will not desist from them, but will contrive new methods and introduce new modes of worship, hoping that God will approve of them. If they succeed according to their wish, they ascribe everything to their superstitions, and become more obstinate. If they perceive that they have derived no advantage, they reject their contrivances, condemn the superstitious worship, and curse

[1] *But he shall not prevail.*—Eng. Ver.

their gods. In short, they rely altogether on the events, and do not judge of anything either by reason or by the word of God. The consequence is, that, as they are guided by what befalls them, they are continually changing their plans. But the Prophet appears to mean somewhat more, namely, that when their folly, in having hitherto laboured to no purpose, shall have been openly manifested and exposed, the Moabites will come into the temple of Chemosh, rather through shame than in the exercise of judgment.

13. *This is the word.* This concluding sentence is the ratification of the prophecy. It means that he has pronounced the decree of God himself, and that he has brought nothing forward that did not proceed from the Lord, and thus, laying aside the person of a man, he introduces God speaking in this manner.

14. *Three years.* The time is fixed, not only for the sake of certainty, but likewise that believers may not become faint through longer delay. He alludes to agreements among men, in which it is customary to fix the time agreed on, which the parties are not at liberty to transgress. This is especially the case in the labours of *hirelings*, from whom Scripture frequently draws a comparison in this respect, that they earnestly long for the appointed day when they shall receive their reward; for they groan, as it were, under the burden, and grievously dislike their daily toils. (Job vii. 1, 2, and xiv. 6; Is. xxi. 16.) In this way the Lord says, that he fixes a day for the Moabites, in which they shall not escape from the entire destruction of their power.

With all his multitude. He expressly mentions a *multitude*, because their number was great, and because they boasted of it, and thought that they were invincible. When he adds, that *the remnant shall be feeble*, he means that there will be so great a change, that they will have no resemblance to their former condition; for nothing will be left but a sad and shocking sight.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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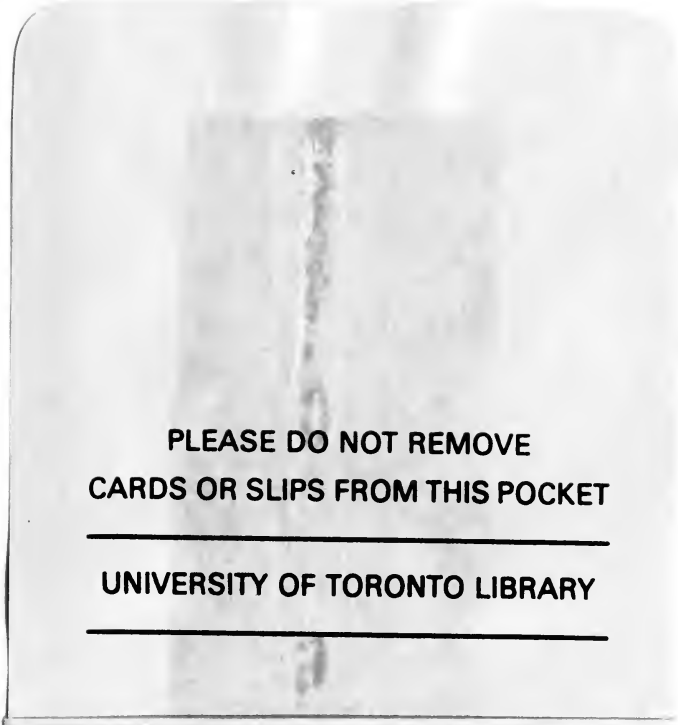

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